

- Absolute speed limit** The maximum/minimum posted speed.
- Abstinence** Voluntary resignation from drugs/alcohol.
- Acceleration lane** A highway merge lane allows drivers entering to increase speed to blend with traffic.
- Accelerator** Pedal controls volume of air-fuel mixture entering engine (press harder, to increase speed).
- Active restraint device** Passenger protective item that must be engaged to become effective; i.e. seat belts.
- Actual cash value** Amount of collision coverage based on vehicle real value.
- Administrative laws** Laws that regulate licenses, vehicle registration, financial responsibility, vehicle standards, and the operation of the HTS.
- Advisory speed limit** Speed limit set for special conditions - sharp curves.
- Air bag** A passive restraint device that inflates with air to cushion the occupants in the event of a collision.
- Alert light** Instrument panel lights that indicate a system is functioning and turn off after a short period of time.
- Alternator** A device produces electricity to operate electrical equipment and to recharge the battery.
- Alternator warning light** Light or gauge on dash panel that can indicate charge system abnormality.
- Angle parking** Parking a vehicle diagonally to the curb.
- Antifreeze** A chemical mixed with water to prevent freezing and corrosion in the cooling system.
- Anti-lock Braking System (ABS)** Computer-controlled braking system that keeps the wheels from locking - it allows for steering / braking to occur at the same time.
- Assessment** To judge the importance of a situation.
- Assigned risk** Type of insurance that provides minimum bodily injury and property damage liability coverage to a high risk driver for a higher premium.
- Atmospheric conditions** Weather and light conditions that affect your ability to see and drive.
- Automatic transmission** A system that shifts through the forward gears as the vehicle speed increases.
- Back-up lights** White lights (rear of vehicle) illuminated when transmission is in reverse (automatic/standard).
- Banked curve** The roadway slopes down toward the inside of the curve to help overcome the force of inertia.
- Basic speed law/limit** Law obliging drivers to drive at a speed that is safe and prudent for existing traffic, roadway, visibility, and vehicle conditions.
- Battery** A unit that stores electricity in chemical form to permit starting your vehicle. Clean connectors.
- BGE setting** (Blind Spot and Glare Elimination) Side mirror adjustment (15 degrees outwards for viewing side positions) eliminating the blind spots and mirror glare from the lights of vehicles following at night. This does not eliminate a visual check when searching for open zones and space.
- Bias-ply tires** Tires with cord layers criss crossing under the exterior material.
- Blind spots** Areas outside the vehicle that are neither visible in the driver's forward field of vision nor in the mirrors (unless mirrors in BGE setting).
- Blood-Alcohol Concentration (BAC)** Percentage of alcohol in blood as measured by a standard test.
- Blood test** Chemical test in which blood is taken from the driver to determine BAC or drug usage.
- Blowout** A rapid loss of tire air pressure while driving.
- Blue-book price** Market value for a specific model and age of a used vehicle.
- Brake fade** A temporary loss of brake effectiveness due to overheating of the brake pads or shoes caused by long, continuous, and hard braking.
- Brake pedal** Driver activated pedal to reduce speed.
- Brake system** An dual hydraulic system to slow or stop a moving vehicle. A mechanical system for parking and emergencies.
- Braking distance** The distance a vehicle travels from the time the driver applies the brake until it stops.
- Breathalyzer test (Intoxilyzer)** Chemical test in which a driver blows into a machine to determine BAC.
- Carbon monoxide** Colorless, odorless, tasteless and toxic gas contained in the exhaust fumes of gasoline engines (a byproduct of combustion).
- Car pooling** Several individuals sharing transportation to one or more destinations in a vehicle.
- Catalytic converter** Part of a vehicle exhaust system that reduces harmful emissions by a chemical reaction.
- Center of gravity** The point around which the weight of the vehicle is balanced.
- Central vision (conic)** Three degree, cone-shaped area in which you can see clearly while looking straight ahead. Read and identify objects.
- Certificate of Title** Official document certifying ownership of a vehicle.
- Closed zone or area** A space not open to you because of a restriction in your line of sight or intended path of travel (occupied by another vehicle).
- Clutch** Driver operated device permits dis-engaging the engine from the transmission (to shift or to stop).
- Collateral** Object of value presented as security for a loan.
- Collision** A crash between any two or more objects.
- Collision insurance** Pays for the repair or replacement of one's own vehicle in a crash regardless of fault.
- Color blindness** Inability to distinguish (certain) colors.
- Commentary driving** The driver verbalizes search/identify/decide while driving.
- Comprehensive insurance** Protection against damage or loss due to theft, vandalism, storms, or fire.
- Compromising hazards** Risk involvement with a less serious hazard to avoid a more serious one.
- Contributory negligence** More than one individual is at fault.
- Controlled-access highway** High speed roadway that vehicles can enter and exit only at interchanges.
- Controlled intersection** A regulated cross-road - lights, yield, or stop signs.
- Cooling system** A vehicle system to remove excess heat and to maintain engine operating temperature within norms.
- Countersteering** Returning the steering wheel in the opposite direction after an initial steering input.
- Covering the brake** Putting the foot over the brake pedal, ready to apply pressure (reducing response time).
- Crankshaft** The shaft turned by the piston movements that transmits the power to the drive train.
- Crest** The highest culminating point of a hill.
- Crossbuck** Large, white x-shaped sign located just prior to a railroad crossing.
- Crosswalk** A path marked on and crossing the roadway to guide pedestrians.
- Crowned road** Road higher in the middle than at sides.
- Cruise control** Device that maintains vehicle speed without the driver pressing on the accelerator.
- Crumple zones** Areas of a vehicle designed to crush and absorb impact, thereby protecting occupants.
- Cylinders** Holes bored in the block that house pistons.
- Dashboard** An illuminated panel with gauges, lights, and indicators that inform the driver.
- Dead pedal** Area on the floorboard designed for the driver to place the left foot to maintain balance.
- Deceleration lane** Extra lane at expressway exits allows drivers exiting to reduce speed prior to the off-ramp.
- Deductible** The portion of any claim that is not covered by the insurance provider. It is the amount of money that must be paid out of pocket before an insurer will cover any expenses.
- Defogger** Electric wires to heat / clear the rear window.
- Depreciation** The value vehicle loses due to age, wear & tear.
- Depressant** Drug that slows down or depresses the central nervous system.
- Depth perception** The three dimensional perception of distance.
- Designated driver** Person who does not drink alcoholic and is appointed to drive others who do drink.
- Destination drive** The process of giving the student a location he/she will drive to, without assistance, using the most direct, efficient, and safe route.
- Detour** A deviation from the normal route.
- Diagonal parking** Parking spaces arranged at an angle to the curb or edge.
- Dimmer switch** A switch to select high or low headlights.
- Disc brakes** Brake units that slow/stop wheel rotation by squeezing a disc.
- Downshift** To shift from a higher to a lower gear.
- Drive belt** A cogged, grooved or V belt that transmits engine rotation to other components in vehicles.
- Drive train** The components that transfer the engine power to the drive wheels.
- Driving record** A file kept by the DPS that lists all traffic violations that a driver has committed. It is used by the courts and insurance companies.
- DUI (Driving Under the Influence)** Operating a motor vehicle while the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is above the legal limit of .08% for adults or any trace whatsoever for minors, and/or while impaired by drugs - whether legal or otherwise.
- DWI** Driving While Intoxicated. (see intoxicated)
- Drum brakes** Brake units that slow/stop wheel rotation by rubbing curved shoes (pads) against a rotating wheel drum.
- Dry steering** Turning the steering wheel while the vehicle is not moving. Prematurely wears out steering, suspension, and tires.
- Edge lines** Lines (white, yellow) painted on the pavement marking the limit of the roadway.
- Emergency brake** The mechanical parking brake system.
- Emergency flashers** The hazard lights that activate all four turn signals to warn of danger or breakdown.
- Emergency vehicle** A police vehicle, fire department vehicle, ambulance, etc. which must be given the right-of-way when the siren or flashing lights are activated; also abide by the Move-Over-Law when at the side of road.
- Emotion** Strong feeling of any kind (anger, fear, joy).
- EMS/EMT** Emergency Medical Services / Technician.



- Endorsement** License qualification needed to legally drive special vehicles.
- Energy of motion** See Kinetic energy.
- Entrance ramp** Roadway leading onto an expressway.
- EPA** Environmental Protection Agency.
- Escape path** A place to drive in case of an unexpected conflict - an "OUT".
- Euphoria** False sense of well-being developed as a result of alcohol or other drug consumption.
- Evaluate** To examine and judge carefully. The first step of the EPE system in which drivers evaluate potential options before acting to reduce risk.
- Evasive action steering** Emergency steering technique used to quickly steer around an object in your path.
- Execute** The final step of the SIPDE or EPE process in which a driver inputs proper vehicle control responses.
- Exhaust manifold** A collector pipe for exhaust gases to exit combustion chambers and enter the exhaust system.
- Exhaust system** Collects burned gases and heat through pipes to release them behind the vehicle.
- Exit ramp** Roadway, often elevated, to exit expressway.
- Expressway** A controlled-access, divided highway with multi-lanes in each direction for high speed driving.
- Fatigue** Temporary physical or mental exhaustion due to lack of rest or sleep, or because of stress / overwork.
- Field of vision** The area that the eyes can perceive without moving the eyes or head; approximately 180°.
- Field sobriety test** Series of on-the-spot tests that help an officer detect impairment of a driver (DUI / DWI).
- Financial responsibility** Law requiring proof of the ability to pay claims resulting from collisions.
- First aid** Emergency treatment given to an injured person before medical professionals arrive.
- Focus vision (foveal)** Part of field of vision which allows the driver to read signs and see details (visual acuity).
- Flywheel** A metal disc attached to the crankshaft to balance engine rotation, transmit power to the drive train, and to crank the engine (starter motor).
- Following distance** The space that a driver maintains from the preceding vehicle in his/her travel path.
- Following (interval) time** Recommended time interval (3 or 4 seconds or more) to follow another vehicle that is ahead of you in your lane.
- Force of impact** The energy with which a moving vehicle collides with an object; varies according to speed, weight, and distance (impact to stop).
- Foresight** The act of foreseeing. The thoughtful regard or provision for the future; prudent forethought.
- Fresh green light** A traffic signal that has just changed from red to green.
- Friction** The resistance to motion between two objects in contact (for example - each tire and the road surface).
- Friction point** The clutch position when the engine begins to turn the transmission and begins to move the vehicle.
- Fringe vision** Wide area (peripheral) used to judge depth and position without clear focusing ability.
- Fuel-injection** System that pumps vaporized fuel into the cylinders.
- Fuel system** The system that stores fuel and supplies the correct fuel-air mixture to operate the engine.
- Fuse** a device designed to open a circuit when the current is excessive, to protect equipment in the circuit.
- Gap** Distance between approaching vehicles, which a driver can utilize to cross or to merge with traffic.
- Gear** Toothed wheel that meshes with others of varying sizes to transmit (the same, increased or decreased) rotation to increase speed or power.
- Gear selector (gearshift) lever** The driver control permitting choice of gear position in a transmission.
- Glare recovery time** The time required to regain clear vision after having been temporarily blinded by light.
- Glow Plug** Unit to preheat combustion chamber (diesel).
- Graduated Driver License (GDL) Program** A system requiring young drivers to progress through a series of licensing stages with various restrictions.
- Gravity** The force that pulls objects toward the center of the earth.
- Green driver** A driver that properly maintains a vehicle with scheduled servicing, recycles oil, and conserves fuel.
- Ground viewing habit** Scanning near the pavement to determine position of other vehicle's wheels and to notice any signs of vehicle movement.
- Guide sign** Informational sign giving distance, services, points of interest, and directions.
- Habitual offender** A driver who commits serious driving offenses.
- Hallucinogen** A mind-altering drug that affects the senses and distorts vision/perception.
- Hand-over-hand steering** A technique to turn the steering wheel by crossing one hand over the other to provide smooth, consistent steering input.
- Hand signals** Arm motions that warn others (communicate) of your intention to slow, stop or turn.
- Hand-to-hand steering** A technique to turn the steering wheel by pushing with one hand while pulling with the other on the steering wheel.
- Hazard lights** A device that activates all four turn signals to warn of danger or breakdowns (4 way flashers).
- Hazardous materials** Items (inflammable, explosive or toxic), often transported in tanker trucks.
- Headlights** White lights mounted on the front of the vehicle that should be illuminated when driving.
- Headrest** Restraint device attached to the top of the seat to cushion the head in collisions. Often adjustable.
- High beams** Brighter white lights on the front of the vehicle, aimed higher to see further than low beams.
- Highway hypnosis** Drowsy or trancelike condition (reduced attention to the driving task) brought on by long periods of high speed driving.
- Highway Transportation System (HTS)** A complex system made up of people, vehicles, and roadways.
- High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane** reserved for vehicles transporting more people (van or car pools, buses).
- Hydroplaning** A layer of water between the tire and the road - no traction.
- Identify** The second step of the SIPDE process in which the driver, using selective seeing, selects hazards.
- Ignition switch** The control to activate/deactivate the vehicle electrical systems and to crank the engine.
- Ignition system** Components that produce, control and distribute the spark that initiates combustion.
- Implied consent law** A state law obliges drivers to take a test for intoxication if arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence or give up his/her license.
- Inertia** The tendency of an object in motion to remain in motion (straight line) and if at rest to remain at rest.
- Inhibitions** Inner forces of personality that restrain or hold back impulsive behavior.
- Intersection** A place where two or more highways meet. Caution must be exercised due to closed sightlines.
- Intervention strategies** Activities to change the status quo; re alcohol - letter writing, designated driver, etc.
- Intoxicated** Under the influence of alcohol/drugs. Driving while intoxicated is a serious and dangerous offense.
- Intoxilyzer** Test in which a driver blows into a machine to determine BAC.
- Jack** A hand operated device for lifting one corner of the vehicle, generally used when changing a tire.
- Jaywalking** The pedestrian practice of crossing a roadway without regard for rules or signals.
- Jump start** Using another vehicle to boost a "dead" battery.
- Kinetic energy** The energy of motion or the energy an object acquires because it is in motion.
- Knowledge test** A test on signs, signals, road markings and rules of the road at the Driver License Office to acquire a learner's permit or license.
- Lane change** Moving the vehicle from one lane of traffic to another using proper space management procedures.
- Lane position** Location of the vehicle within confines of the lane of traffic using reference points.
- Lane-use signals** Lights mounted above lanes to control the flow and direction of traffic in the lane.
- Leasing** Long term rental contract, alternative to buying.
- Legal limit** The amount of alcohol legally allowed in a driver's bloodstream in Texas = .08 for adults and 0 for those under 21.
- Legend** Key explaining symbols/markings used on a map.
- Liability insurance** Protection from financial loss due to a collision when the insured party is responsible.
- Lubrication system** The components that supply oil to the moving parts to prevent damage/overheating.
- Lug nuts** Devices that attach the wheel to the vehicle.
- Mass transportation** Vehicles to move large numbers of people from place to place (public transportation).
- Maintenance** Checkups, service and repairs required to keep a vehicle in proper operating condition.
- Manslaughter** Accidental killing (could be while driving a motor vehicle).
- Margin of safety** See safety cushion
- Master cylinder** Unit in the brake system where fluid is stored and pressurized to activate the brakes (pressure sent to wheels). Dual system to eliminate brake failures.
- Median** A width of space (area of ground) that separates traffic moving in opposite directions.
- Medical payments insurance** Insurance that covers the cost of



- hospitalization and treatments for injuries incurred during a collision.
- Merging area** The section at the end of an acceleration lane where vehicles must join the flow of traffic.
- Minimizing hazards** Reducing risk of a collision from a hazard by adjusting speed, lane position or both.
- Minimum speed limit** Lowest legal speed (in normal conditions) a vehicle may travel on a roadway to prevent wide differences in speed among vehicles.
- MIP (Minor in Possession)** Anyone under age 21 in possession of alcohol.
- Moped** Two-wheeled vehicle that can be driven with either a motor or pedal.
- Motor scooter** Low-powered, two-wheeled vehicle that is more powerful than a moped.
- Muffler** A device in the exhaust system to minimize noise. Leaks are noisy/dangerous because of exhaust fumes.
- Narcotic drug** An illegal drug that is used to change the way a person (driver) feels and acts.
- Navigating** Following a route by reading a map or a GPS device.
- Neutral** A transmission position in which the gears are not engaged and cannot transmit power. (For starting.)
- Night vision** The ability to see clearly, judge depth perception, and recover from glare in the dark.
- No-fault insurance** Insurance that pays claims to the insured up to specific limits regardless of fault.
- No-zones** Large mirror blind spots where truck drivers cannot see other vehicles (front, sides, or rear).
- Nystagmus** Involuntary jerking of the eyes as a person gazes to the side. Part of the field sobriety test.
- Odometer** Device that indicates the total distance a vehicle has been driven.
- Oil filter** Device in the lubrication system that removes dirt from the oil.
- Oil pressure gauge** Indicator that shows the pressure at which the oil is circulating through the engine.
- Oil pump** Device forces oil to all engine moving parts.
- Open zone or area** Space where the driver can move - no restriction to his/her line of sight or path of travel.
- Overdrive** A gear that permits the vehicle to cruise efficiently at high speed.
- Overdriving the headlights** Driving at such a high speed at night that your stopping distance exceeds the area illuminated by the headlights.
- Oversteer** When the rear tires lose traction causing a spinning effect around the vehicle's center of gravity (yaw). The vehicle slides/spins (left or right) even though the driver is not turning the steering wheel.
- Over-The-Counter drug (OTC drug)** Drug that can be legally purchased without a doctor's prescription.
- Owner's manual** Manufacturer's booklet providing detailed information about the vehicle, its operation and recommended service/maintenance.
- Oxidation** The way the body eliminates alcohol by the action of the liver.
- Parallel parking** Parking when lined up parallel with the curb - within 6 to 18 inches of the curb in Texas.
- Parking brake** A mechanical unit that acts on the rear wheels to keep them from moving. Also used to slow /stop if the hydraulic brake system fails.
- Passive restraints** Safety devices that act without requiring any action by the user. (Air bags, some safety belts)
- Pedestrian** An HTS user on foot.
- Peer pressure** Mental and social influence of others of a similar age on decision-making skills.
- Perception distance** The distance a vehicle travels during the time a driver sees/identifies a hazard ahead.
- Peripheral vision** The portion of the field of vision around the central conic vision (up to 180 degrees).
- Perpendicular parking** Parking at a 90° angle to the curb or boundary.
- Personal Injury Protection (PIP coverage)** Insurance that covers medical expenses and loss of income for the driver and the passengers.
- Pitch of the vehicle** A suspension change initiated by accelerating or braking. Sudden or excessive pitch changes may cause traction loss.
- Point of no-return** Point beyond which a driver can no longer stop safely without entering intersection.
- Policy** Contract between a vehicle owner and an insurance company specifying the amount and type of insurance coverage and the cost.
- Piston** A cylindrical-shaped unit that moves up and down in the cylinders.
- Power brakes** A system that facilitates stopping the vehicle by increasing pressure applied by the driver.
- Power steering** A system that facilitates steering by using hydraulic pressure supplied by a pump.
- Power train** Components that transmit engine power to the drive wheels.
- Predict** Third step of the SIPDE process in which driver, after identifying a hazard, predicts what might happen.
- Premium** The sum an individual pays the insurance company for insurance coverage - the policy fee.
- Prescription medicine** Drug that can be purchased legally only when ordered by a doctor.
- Preventive maintenance** Routine care and attention to your vehicle to keep in proper working order.
- Progressive acceleration** Gradual increase in pressure on the accelerator to increase speed and shift vehicle weight toward the rear.
- Property damage liability** Insurance coverage that pays for property damage in a collision caused by the insured.
- Protected left turn** Left turn made on a left-turn light, green arrow, or delayed green while oncoming traffic is stopped.
- Pull-out area** Additional right lane on narrow mountain roadways for slower-moving vehicles.
- Push-pull steering** Using hand-to-hand steering technique (see hand-to-hand).
- Pumping the brake** Applying pressure on the brake pedal, releasing to allow the tires to roll and then re-applying.
- Radial tires** Tires with the plies straight across the tire parallel to each other encircled by a steel belt.
- Radiator** A heat exchange unit that stores and cools the engine coolant before it circulates in the engine.
- Ramp meters** Stop and go signals (lights) at the entrance to freeways controlling the flow of traffic entering.
- Reaction time** The time it takes a driver to input vehicle control actions once a course of action is decided upon.
- Reckless driving** Driving in a very careless manner endangering others.
- Recreational Vehicle (RV)** Large vehicle used mainly for pleasure and travel (van, motor home, camper).
- Reference points** Positions on the vehicle related to the roadway to help the driver in vehicle positioning in the environment and for maneuvering.
- Reflexes** An automatic response of the body to a signal it receives.
- Regulatory sign** A device that controls the flow of traffic at a given location.
- Release form** Paper signed by a person - injured or has property damage - stating that he/she is not going to hold someone responsible.
- Reversible lane** A lane in which the direction of the traffic flow changes at specific times.
- Revocation** Cancellation of a driver's license for serious driving violations (DUI, manslaughter, etc.).
- Rheostat** A device regulating the intensity of light in the instrument panel.
- Right-of-way** Traffic rules determine who should yield to other road users in given situations.
- Right turn on red** Turning right after a stop when the signal is red unless specifically prohibited.
- Risk** The possibility of a conflict that could result in a crash or collision.
- Rocking a vehicle** Repeating the sequence of driving forward a little and then backing to move your vehicle out of deep snow, mud, or sand.
- Roll of the vehicle** A suspension change initiated by driver action of steering the vehicle. Sudden or excessive roll changes may cause traction loss.
- Rumble strips** Sections of grooved pavement intended to alert drivers of the edge of the road, or a change in road conditions ahead (tollbooth).
- Runaway vehicle ramp** Place on mountain roads for vehicles to safely get out of traffic and stop when their brakes are no longer effective.
- Running start** Creating a speed superiority prior to passing another vehicle.
- Safety belt** A restraint device that prevents occupants from striking the interior of the vehicle - seat belts.
- Safety chains** Extra connection for a trailer used as a backup in case a trailer hitch fails.
- School safety patrol** Person(s) designated by school to assist children across intersections. Vests or special belts identify them. Drivers must obey them.
- School zone** Area of roadway near a school that is subject to special speed limits set by state/local law.
- Searching** Scanning the area around/ahead of the vehicle in an orderly pattern. The first step of the SIPDE process.
- Selector lever** Device in an automatic used to select gears.
- Selective seeing** Searching only for clues that restrict your line of sight, require you to change your path of travel, or adjust to a specific regulation (signs, signals, etc.).
- Separating hazards** Dealing with multiple hazards one at a time.
- Shared left-turn lane** Center lane on a busy street that allows left turns into business areas in both directions.
- Shock absorbers** Devices that limit and stop the bouncing action of the vehicle springs.
- Shoulder** The strip along the sides of a roadway (may or may not be paved) intended for emergency use.
- Sightline** An area in which you can see; used as a basis for steering and speed adjustments.
- SIPDE system** Five step driving strategy (search, identify, predict, decide and execute) to process information and evade potential danger in an organized manner.
- Skid** When tire patches lose part or all of their traction with the road surface due to abrupt suspension balance changes or roadway surface conditions.



- Smith System** Systematic approach to defensive driving, which includes: (1) Aim high in steering, (2) Keep your eyes moving, (3) Get the big picture, (4) Make sure they see you, (5) Leave yourself an out.
- Space areas** Designated positions around the vehicle to identify relationships to the environment or objects or other road users.
- Space cushion** A open area around the vehicle that a driver should maintain to have room to maneuver.
- Space management** Using SIPDE to control the area around your vehicle.
- Spark plug** An ignition component that supplies the spark to initiate engine combustion.
- Speed superiority** A difference of 10 to 15 mph of the passing vehicle over the vehicle being passed in order to complete the pass in a designated time period.
- Staggered stop** Stopping before the stop line to maintain front space control and diminish the risk of a collision.
- Stale green light** A traffic signal light that has been green for some time (or since first seen) and is likely to change to yellow.
- Stimulant** Drug speeds up the central nervous system.
- Stopped position** Seeing the back tires of the vehicle ahead, allowing the driver space to steer around the vehicle to avoid a stalled, turning, or backing vehicle. (Also to avoid carjacking problems in heavy traffic.)
- Substance abuse** Excessive use of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Suspension** The withdrawal of a driver's license for a period of 90 days, 6 months or 1 year due to many traffic violations or a serious driving offense.
- Suspension system** Components support vehicle weight in a flexible manner while absorbing road shocks.
- Switchbacks** Sharp turns on mountain roads, similar to a U-turn, that allow the road to climb a steep slope.
- Synthesizing** Combining elements so as to form a new complex product or idea.
- Tachometer** A gauge indicating the engine revolutions per minute (RPM) to inform the driver.
- Tailgate** Driving too closely behind another vehicle.
- Target area** A fixed location in the center of the travel path you intend to follow.
- Temperature gauge** An indicator light or gauge that indicates the engine operating temperature.
- Thermostat** A device that regulates the engine temperature by controlling the flow of the coolant to the radiator.
- Threshold braking** A braking technique in which the driver applies the brakes just short of wheel lock-up.
- Thrust acceleration** Pushing down on the accelerator sharply in order to increase speed to avoid a collision. Also used in passing and when entering expressway (kickdown). Shifts weight to rear wheels.
- Title** Legal proof of vehicle ownership (certificate of title).
- Tolerance** The manner in which the body responds to alcohol/drugs; dependent upon individual weight and past experience with alcohol or drugs.
- Tort Law** Wrongful act or damage (not involving breach of contract) for which a civil action can be brought.
- Tort liability** Civil rules imposed by government concerning government, people's property or any damage or injury for which you can be held liable.
- Total stopping distance** The total distance required to stop a vehicle that is in motion.
- Towing insurance** Optional coverage that protects against the cost of on-the-road repairs and towing.
- Traction** The friction between the vehicle tire patches and the road surface.
- Traction Control System (TCS)** Device that allows acceleration inputs without traction loss.
- Traffic circle** Intersection formed by several roadways meeting at a circle (also roundabout).
- Traffic control device** Any light, sign or pavement marking used to tell road users what to do.
- Transverse** Perpendicular to your path of travel. Lines across the road to direct vehicles and pedestrians into and through intersections.
- Travel path** Actual or potential path a vehicle might be going; a combination of targeting, sightlines, visual references, and experience.
- Tread** The raised pattern on the outer surface of a tire that grips the road and provides a channeling action for water or snow on the roadway.
- Tread wear indicator** Bars that appear in tire grooves when they are less than 1/16 of an inch deep.
- Trip odometer** An indicator that registers mileage a vehicle travelled since it was reset to zero.
- Tunnel vision** Very narrow field of vision (standard of 140° or less) with little peripheral ability.
- Turnabout** A maneuver to travel in the opposite direction.
- Turning bay** A special turn lane found on multi-lane highways, two-way roads, and some city intersections.
- Turn signal** Lights activated by the driver to warn of his/her intentions (communicate). Also hand signals.
- Two second rule** Technique for calculating and maintaining a minimum following distance under ideal driving conditions. A three or four second minimum count is highly recommended for novice drivers.
- Uncontrolled intersection** An intersection at which there is no traffic control signal, sign or roadway marking to regulate traffic (including railroad crossings that do not have flashing red lights or crossing gates).
- Uncontrolled railroad crossing** Level crossing with no signals/bells/crossing gates regulating traffic.
- Understeer** When the front tire patches lose traction due to momentum and inertia forces, the vehicle continues straight even though the steering wheel is turned.
- Uninsured motorist insurance** Protection from financial loss due to a collision caused by a driver without insurance coverage or a hit and run, as well as any amount that may exceed the other party's coverage.
- Universal joint** Connectors that permit a change of angle while transmitting power (part of power train).
- Unprotected left turn** Left turn at a signal-controlled intersection without a special left-turn light.
- Urine test** A chemical test of the driver's urine for the amount of alcohol or drugs in the driver's system.
- U-turn** A turnabout (without reversing) maneuver performed by turning sharply left.
- Van pooling** Several individuals sharing transportation to one or more destinations in a van.
- Variable message signs** Signs that post messages to inform drivers of road conditions ahead.
- Vapor lock** Fuel vaporizes in the fuel lines and the fuel system cannot pump it into the injectors.
- Vehicle balance** Transfer of weight of the vehicle (from center of gravity) to different points on the vehicle.
- Vehicle balance sensitive** The shoulder belt locks when the brakes are applied and the balance of the vehicle leans one into the shoulder belt.
- Vehicle code** Federal and state laws that regulate the highway transportation system (HTS).
- Vehicle registration** A form that must be carried in the vehicle to prove who owns it, that it is licensed, and that the vehicle taxes have been paid.
- Velocitation** The improper sensation of vehicle speed. After extended high speed driving, the sensation of moving more slowly than the vehicle actually is, resulting in driving too fast unconsciously.
- Visual acuity** The ability to see details up close and from afar.
- Visual eye-lead-time** The time (and distance) that the driver's visual search precedes the vehicle.
- Visual referencing** Points on the vehicle that are used to assist the driver in positioning the vehicle with respect to curbs, lines, lane positions and to control input timing for maneuvers.
- Visual tracking** Aiming and steering in the desired travel path of the vehicle.
- Warning lights and gauges** Dashboard indicators to inform the driver of the condition of the vehicle systems and warn when problems occur.
- Warning signs** Traffic signs that warn of danger ahead.
- Warranty** A written guaranty from the manufacturer to repair or replace defective components for a specified time or mileage.
- Water pump** A device that circulates the engine coolant under pressure.
- Weave lane** When an entrance and an exit use a common extra lane (for acceleration as well as deceleration) on a freeway or expressway (interchange).
- Weaver** A person who moves their vehicle back and forth between lanes. This often results in collisions.
- Weight transfer** Moving the concentration of weight from one point of the vehicle to another caused by acceleration, deceleration and cornering forces.
- Wheel alignment** Mechanical adjustment of the steering system components to vehicle specifications.
- Wolf pack** A group of vehicles traveling fairly closely together on an expressway.
- Yaw** The spinning effect of a vehicle around its center of gravity (oversteer).
- Yield** To give another road user the right-of-way. Allowing another to proceed first.
- Zero tolerance law** Law stating it is illegal for persons under the age of 21 to drive with any measurable amount of alcohol in the blood.
- Zone** One of six areas of space around a vehicle that is at least the width of a lane and extends as far as the driver can see to the front, side, or rear.



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