



Traffic Safety

Scouts BSA · Health & Safety

Name

Started

Completed

Traffic Safety helps you understand how drivers, cyclists, and walkers share the road safely. You will learn about safe driving habits, check a vehicle, and help spread the word about road safety. It's great preparation for the day you start driving.

Requirements

Every official requirement, in plain language. Check the official wording when you sign off (scouting.org/merit-badges/traffic-safety/). Tips and examples are ideas, not extra requirements.

1 Preventing impaired driving

Tips for this section: Talk with a parent about how phones, tiredness, and impairment make driving dangerous.

Example for this section: Explain how each one affects a driver: a phone pulls eyes and attention off the road, alcohol or drugs slow reactions and judgment, and fatigue can be like driving impaired. Share one thing a passenger can do, like offering to handle the navigation.

- ☐ **1a** Explain why distracted drivers must not drive. List five common distractions, explain how distractions lead to crashes, and tell how drivers can reduce them

- ☐ **1b** Explain why a driver under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other substances must never drive, and how alcohol, cold medicine, and prescription and illegal drugs affect driving. Find your state's legal blood alcohol limit, its DWI/DUI penalties, and its open-container law

- ☐ **1c** Explain why tired drivers must not drive, and how drivers should plan to stay alert when carrying family, friends, Scouts, or themselves

- ☐ **1d** Describe common new-driver mistakes, how they raise crash risk, how drivers can lower that risk, and how driving behavior affects car insurance rates

2 Vehicle safety

Tips for this section: Practice buckling up correctly and look for safety features in your family's car.

- ☐ **2a** Show the correct way to wear a lap and shoulder belt. Explain why the driver and every passenger, including children in age-appropriate seats, should always buckle up

- ☐ **2b** List five vehicle safety features other than seat belts and restraints, and describe what each is, how it works, and how it improves safety

3 Vehicle checkup with adult supervision

Tips for this section: Do the safety checkup with a parent, looking at tires, lights, and other key parts.

Example for this section: With a parent, walk around the car and check tire pressure and tread, all lights and turn signals, wipers, mirrors, and the horn. Write down what you checked and anything that needs attention.

- ☐ **3a** Using a vehicle you have access to, show that all headlights and signal lights are clean and working and where their switches are. Explain how lights help drivers stay safe, be courteous, and communicate with other drivers

- ☐ **3b** Explain what can block a driver's view through the front, rear, and side windows. Do a smear-and-clear test to see whether the wipers clear the windshield or need replacing, and describe good- and bad-weather times wipers matter

- ☐ **3c** Show how to find the recommended tire pressure, check tire pressure, and check tread depth. Explain why pressure and tread matter for traction, stopping distance, tire wear, and fuel economy

- ☐ **3d** Check that the vehicle has the tools to change a flat or apply tire sealant. Demonstrate changing a flat tire and using tire sealant

- ☐ **3e** Away from traffic, mark off reaction and braking distances for an emergency stop on level dry and wet pavement at 25, 55, and 70 mph, using the pamphlet's template or one your counselor approves. Discuss how they change for normal vs. impaired drivers, day vs. night, and weather

4 Traffic safety and the law

Tips for this section: Ask a parent or officer what drivers should do after a crash or when stopped by police.

- ☐ **4a** Describe at least three traffic laws that apply to motor vehicle drivers and to bicyclists

- ☐ **4b** Explain what a driver should do, and how to behave, when pulled over by a police officer

- ☐ **4c** Explain what drivers should do if they're in a car crash

- ☐ **4d** Name the three documents drivers must legally carry whenever they drive

5 Road design and signs

Tips for this section: On your next ride, notice road designs and sign shapes and colors, and talk about what they mean.

Example for this section: Make a chart of sign shapes and colors: an octagon means stop, a triangle means yield, yellow diamonds warn of hazards, and orange signs mean work zones. Add one road design feature, like a roundabout or rumble strip, and explain how it prevents crashes.

- ☐ **5a** Explain how the design of intersections, medians, and shoulders makes roads safer, and discuss safety features of interstate highways

- ☐ **5b** Explain how sign colors and shapes help drivers understand them, and the purposes of different signs, signals, and pavement markings

6 Sharing the road

Tips for this section: Practice safe walking and biking habits, and talk about how drivers can watch for others.

Example for this section: Describe one tricky spot in your neighborhood, like a busy crosswalk or a road without a bike lane, and explain what drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians should each do there to stay safe.

- ☐ **6a** Describe how much more visible at night a lit bicycle and rider (or a pedestrian) in reflective gear are than an unlit rider (or pedestrian) in dark clothes without reflective material

- ☐ **6b** Name at least four safety steps pedestrians, including hikers, should take when walking along or crossing roads

- ☐ **6c** Name at least four safety steps drivers should take when approaching a school bus that is picking up or dropping off students

- ☐ **6d** Discuss the risks of blind spots around cars and trucks, and ways drivers can avoid lane-change crashes

7 Traffic safety in your community: Choose 1 of 3

Tips for this section: Choose the option that interests you most, like interviewing a police officer or leading a safety event.

Example for this section: If you organize an event, you might set up a seat belt check at a troop meeting, or a booth at a school event where people sign a no-texting-while-driving pledge. Plan it with your counselor and leaders.

- ☐ **7a** Interview a traffic police officer or traffic safety professional in your community about the three traffic safety problems that concern them most, then discuss ways to solve one of them with your counselor

- ☐ **7b** Write a personal traffic safety pledge covering three traffic safety issues that worry you most, and discuss it with your counselor

- ☐ **7c** Start and organize an activity or event that shows why traffic safety matters

- ☐ **8** Explore careers in traffic safety. Research one: training, education, costs, job outlook, pay, duties, and advancement (searches, interviews, or visits need a parent's or guardian's OK). Discuss with your counselor what you found and what makes it interesting to you

Tip: Look up careers like traffic engineer or police officer and what training they need.