

Driver Safety

Module III.0

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Study Guide

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Introduction to Driver Safety

Driving patrol vehicles can often be taken for granted. The security officer or supervisor who has been driving since they were sixteen will often believe that they have the skills necessary to drive a patrol vehicle and may be lured into a false sense of security, increasing liability for their employer as well as for themselves. Remember: when a security officer is driving a mobile patrol vehicle, golf cart or bicycle, he/she is using the property of someone else. A security officer should take personal ownership and responsibility for the confidence that has been invested in him/her by their employer.

Vehicle Safety

Patrol vehicles can vary in size, type, make and model. But for the purposes of this discussion, the main focus will be placed on motorized automobiles.

Prepare Yourself

Security officers must be prepared to drive a vehicle prior to arriving at the post where the vehicle is located. Post instructions will detail the route(s) that are to be patrolled, buildings that are to be inspected, and individuals that need to be contacted whenever a problem or issue arises. Post instructions need to be easy-to-read, clear and concise in their instructions, and up-to-date with current phone numbers for appropriate contacts.

Prior to beginning the patrol, a vehicle checklist should be completed by the officer arriving on duty. The checklist will usually require the following information:

1. Beginning mileage of the patrol vehicle
2. Current date and time
3. Current weather conditions
4. General condition of the vehicle exterior (dents, scratches, etc. should be noted)
5. Fuel and oil levels
6. Tire pressure and general tread condition
7. Inspection of the spare tire and other emergency equipment

Once inside the vehicle, the driver should be certain all equipment functions as required. Such equipment includes: seatbelt, headlights, turn signals, horn, rear and side-view mirrors, radio and/or cell phone. In addition, the exterior of the vehicle should be relatively clean and the windshield clear of dirt and grime.

Driving the Security Vehicle

Once the security officer has begun to operate the security vehicle, all California state driving regulations must govern the behavior of the driver. First and foremost, the security officer must possess a valid California driver's license and even though liability insurance will be provided by the contract security company, all personnel must maintain the minimum level of personal liability insurance as required by law. Security vehicles receive no special exemption from driving regulations. Under no circumstances are security officers to exceed posted speed limits for any reason. In addition, under no circumstances are hitchhikers, disabled motorists or others to be permitted inside the security vehicle or given transportation. For those employees who have clients that may require assistance, appropriate calls should be made to ensure the individual receives vehicle assistance or other appropriate aid. Liability issues exist for the security officer and his/her employer should any non-security personnel be injured while in the vehicle.

While patrolling, security personnel must always be observant of road and surface conditions that may be hazardous such as snow, ice and rain. In addition, while patrolling on private property, defensive driver techniques will assist the officer in maintaining an excellent safety record. In dark conditions, and while patrolling a client's property, blind corners need special attention.

When driving, security personnel need to ensure that they stay on the road surface at all times and never drive onto areas off of the main road unless specifically told or asked to do so in the post orders or instructions. Many manufacturing facilities may have vehicle hazards such as broken or jagged glass, wood, steel, etc. that can cause damage to tires. A security vehicle with flat tires is of no use! Even while on private property, security officers must adhere to all posted speed limits and obey all traffic rules.

You must drive defensively at all times. Assume that the drivers surrounding your vehicle are not attentive to you. Be prepared for anything and always be courteous while patrolling. Never engage in improper behavior or display hand gestures to rude or offensive drivers. Never use your vehicle's spotlight or emergency lights other than for their intended use.

Exiting the Vehicle

Often while patrolling, the security officer will be required to leave the patrol vehicle to make a building inspection or check on a security-related matter. It may be necessary to direct the headlights of the security vehicle in the vicinity of the area to be inspected. If the officer needs to enter a building even for just a minute, the car ignition should be turned off and the keys retained by the officer. The vehicle should also be locked immediately after the officer exits the vehicle. If the officer has a radio or cell phone, the officer should notify his/her supervisor or dispatch center they are leaving the vehicle and entering a building, making sure to cite the name and address of the location.

Security personnel should be certain to park the vehicle in a safe manner and out of the way of traffic. If necessary and upon previous instruction, the emergency flashers of the vehicle may be turned on while the officer is out of the vehicle.

At the conclusion of the security patrol, the vehicle checklist should be completed by the officer going off-duty, noting mileage, fuel, etc...along with any significant events that occurred during the patrol.

Notes:

Bicycle Safety

When patrolling using a bicycle, a security officer must be certain to have the proper safety equipment, notably an approved helmet, side-view mirrors, reflectors, and lighting. This is the most important safety aspect for a security officer to remember.

Use Of A Helmet

Don't confuse wearing a helmet with biking safety. Wearing a helmet alone will not prevent someone from getting hit by car! While it is a good idea to always wear a helmet, the #1 goal for a cyclist should always be to avoid getting hit in the first place. Plenty of cyclists are killed by cars even though they were wearing helmets. Ironically, if they had ridden without helmets, yet followed the guidelines listed below, they might still be alive today. Don't confuse wearing a helmet with biking safely. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Following the law is not enough to keep a security officer safe. Here's an example: The law tells you to ride as far to the right as possible. But if you ride too far to the right, someone exiting a parked car could open their door and possibly cause injury to you.

Collision Type #1: The Right Cross

This is one of the most common ways to get hit (or almost get hit). A car is pulling out of a side street, parking lot, or driveway on the right. Notice that there are actually two possible kinds of collisions here: Either you're in front of the car and the car hits you, or the car pulls out in front of you and you slam into it.

How to avoid this collision:

1. Get a headlight. If you're riding at night, you should absolutely use a front headlight. It's required by law, anyway. Even for daytime riding, a bright white light that has a flashing mode can make you more visible to motorists who might otherwise "right cross" you. Look for the new LED headlights which last ten times as long as old-style lights.

2. Honk. Get a loud horn and USE IT whenever you see a car approaching (or waiting) ahead of you and to the right.
3. Slow down. If you can't make eye contact with the driver (especially at night), slow down enough so that you're able to completely stop if you have to.

Collision Type #2: The Door Prize

A driver opens his door right in front of you. You run right into it because there is not enough time for you to stop.

How to avoid this collision:

Ride to the left. Ride far enough to the left that you won't run into any door that's opened unexpectedly. You may be wary about riding so far into the lane that cars can't pass you easily, but you're MUCH more likely to get hit by the door of a parked car if you ride too close to it than you are from getting hit from behind by a car whose driver can clearly see you.

Collision Type #3: Red Light Of Death

You stop to the right of a car that's already waiting at a red light or stop sign. When the light turns green, you move forward, and they turn directly into you because you are in a blind spot and they cannot see you.

How to avoid this collision:

Don't stop in a driver's blind spot. Simply stop BEHIND a car, instead of to the right of it. This makes you very visible to traffic on all sides. It's impossible for the car behind you to avoid seeing you when you're right in front of it.

Collision Type #4: The Right Hook

A car passes you and then tries to make a right turn directly in front of you. They think you're not going very fast just because you're on a bicycle, so it never occurs to them that they can't pass you in time. Even if you have to slam on your brakes to avoid hitting them, they often won't feel they've done anything wrong. This kind of collision is very hard to avoid because you

typically don't see it until the last second, and because there's nowhere for you to go when it happens.

How to avoid this collision:

1. Don't ride on the sidewalk. When you come off the sidewalk to cross the street you're invisible to motorists.
2. Ride to the left. Taking up the whole lane makes it more difficult for drivers to pass you, cut you off, or turn into you.
3. Glance in your mirror well before approaching and entering an intersection. When you're actually going through an intersection, you'll need to be paying very close attention to what is in front of you.

Collision Type #5: The Right Hook, Part II

You're passing a slow-moving car on the right, when it unexpectedly makes a right turn right into you while trying to get to a parking lot, driveway, or side street.

How to avoid this collision:

1. Don't pass on the right. This collision is very easy to avoid. Simply don't pass any vehicle on the right. If the car ahead of you is going only 10 mph, slow down behind it.

If several cars are stopped at a traffic light, you can attempt passing cautiously on the right. Remember that someone can unexpectedly open the passenger door as they exit the car.

Note: when you're tailing a slow-moving vehicle, you should ride behind it, not immediately to the right of it, which is a blind spot. Even if you're not passing a car on the right, you could still run into it if it turns right while you're next to it. Give yourself enough room to brake in case the vehicle turns.

2. If you are behind the wheel of a vehicle, look behind you before turning right to avoid hitting cyclists who violate tip #1 above and try to pass you on the right. Look behind you before making a right-hand turn to make sure a bike isn't trying to pass you.

Collision Type #6: The Left Cross

A car coming towards you makes a left turn right in front of you, or right into you.

How to avoid this collision:

1. Don't ride on the sidewalk. When you come off the sidewalk to cross the street, you're invisible to turning motorists.
2. Get a headlight. If you're riding at night, you should absolutely use a front headlight. Plus, it's required by law.
3. Wear something bright, even during the day. It may seem silly, but bikes are small and easy to not see, even during the day. Yellow or orange reflective vests really make a big difference. Reflective leg bands are also easy and inexpensive.
4. Slow down. If you can't make eye contact with the driver (especially at night), slow down enough so you are able to completely stop.

Notes:

Collision Type #7: The Rear End

You innocently move a little to the left to go around a parked car or some other obstruction in the road and you get nailed by a car coming up from behind.

How to avoid this collision:

1. Never move left without checking your mirror or looking behind you first.
2. Don't swerve in and out of the parking lane if it contains any parked cars. You might be tempted to ride in the parking lane where there are no parked cars. However, once you reenter into the traffic lane you may encounter a parked car.
3. Use a handlebar mirror.

Collision Type #8: The Rear End, Part II

A car runs into you from behind. This is what many cyclists fear the most, but it's not the most common kind of accident.

How to avoid this collision:

1. Get a rear light. If you're riding at night, you absolutely should use a flashing red rear light. They are effective and inexpensive.
2. Choose to ride on wide streets. Ride on streets whose outside lane is so wide that it can easily accommodate a car and a bike side-by-side.
3. Choose to ride on slower streets. The slower a car is going, the more time the driver has to see you.
4. Use back streets on weekends
5. Get a mirror and use it.
6. If it looks like a car doesn't see you, hop off your bike and onto the sidewalk.
7. Don't hug the curb. This is counter-intuitive, but gives you a little space between you and the curb. This allows you some room to

move in case you see a large vehicle in your mirror approaching without moving over far enough to avoid you.

Notes:

Collision Type #9: The Crosswalk Slam

You're riding on the sidewalk and cross the street at a crosswalk, and a car makes a right turn, directly into you. Cars aren't expecting bikes in the crosswalk, so you have to be VERY careful to avoid this one.

How to avoid this collision:

1. Get a headlight. If you're riding at night, you should absolutely use a front headlight. Plus, it's required by law.
2. Slow down. Slow down enough so that you're able to completely stop if necessary.
3. Don't ride on the sidewalk in the first place. Crossing between sidewalks can be a dangerous maneuver. In addition, riding on the sidewalk could cause injury and/or harm to pedestrians.

Collision Type #10: Wrong Way Wallop

You're riding the wrong way, against traffic, on the left-hand side of the street. A car makes a right turn from a side street, driveway, or parking lot, right into you. They didn't see you because they were looking for traffic only on their left, not on their right. They had no reason to expect that someone would be coming at them from the wrong direction.

Even worse, you could be hit by a car on the same road coming at you from straight ahead. They have less time to see you and take evasive action because they're approaching you at a fast rate.

How to avoid this collision:

Don't ride against traffic. Ride with traffic, in the same direction. Riding against traffic may seem like a good idea because you can see the cars that are passing you, but it's not. Here's why:

Cars which pull out of driveways, parking lots, and cross streets (ahead of you and to the left), which are making a right onto your street, aren't

expecting traffic to be coming at them from the wrong way. Riding the wrong way is illegal and you can get ticketed for it.

Notes:

More General Tips

Light up--Headlights are just as important as rear lights. Look for the new kind with LED's since they last ten times as long as old-style lights.

Ride as if you were invisible--Assume that motorists don't know you're there and ride in such a way that they won't hit you even if they don't see you.

You're not trying to BE invisible; you're trying to make it irrelevant whether cars see you or not roadways.

Around 44,000 people die in car crashes in the U.S. each year. About 1 in 54 is a bicyclist.

Golf Cart Safety Procedures

The following are basic rules of operating and maintaining golf carts when used by security personnel.

Safety When Operating a Golf Cart

The maximum speed of a golf cart depends upon the terrain over which it is being driven, the weather conditions, and the total weight of the golf cart and passengers and any equipment being carried. A golf cart should be operated at a speed equivalent to a well-paced walk, but no faster than 15 MPH. Golf cart operators must observe all California vehicle traffic laws such as lane travel, stop signs, legal passing of other vehicles, etc.

Golf carts should be operated on a client's private property at all times. Sidewalks should be used only where a client's campus streets and/or parking lots are not available, in which case only the nearest adjacent street or parking lot should be used.

Most golf carts are designed to carry a driver and one passenger. A golf cart should not be operated with more passengers than it is designed to carry. All golf carts should have seat belts for the operator and each passenger, and each person riding in the golf cart should be restrained by a safety belt. All occupants in the golf cart should keep hands, arms, legs and feet within the confines of the golf cart at all times when the cart is in motion.

Pedestrians always have the right-of-way. Operators of golf carts must permit this right-of-way. If the golf cart is being operated on a sidewalk, the operator will pull off of the sidewalk or stop when approaching pedestrians.

When the golf cart is not in use, the operator will place the golf cart control lever in the "Neutral" position and remove the key.

When the golf cart is not to be used, such as overnight, the unit should be secured with a cable and lock or other equivalent locking mechanism.

Safety Checklist

The security officer should, before operating the golf cart, check tires for proper condition and inflation. The operator should check proper brake

operation and also check for any indication of battery fluid leaks (such as wet spots under the unit). If the golf cart is in need of repair or maintenance, the unit should not be used and taken to get serviced.

Operating the Golf Cart

The following rules should be observed when operating or using a golf cart:

- Never leave the keys in the golf cart when unattended.
- Always lock and secure the golf cart when it is not being used, such as when storing overnight.
- Never back up without looking to see what is behind the cart.
- Never shift gears while the vehicle is in motion.
- Never operate the golf cart with more passengers aboard than the golf cart is designed to accommodate.
- Always obey all traffic rules and regulations. Never exceed the safe speed limit.
 - Reduce speed to compensate for inclines, pedestrians, and weather conditions.
- Maintain adequate distance between vehicles. Approach sharp or
- blind corners with caution. Operator and passengers should always wear seat belts.
- Keep hands, legs, feet and arms inside the confines of the golf cart when it is in motion.
- Use a tow bar only when towing a golf cart.

Battery Recharge

When recharging the batteries, the following safety rules should be observed:

- Do not smoke near the recharge station.

- Only an approved battery charger should be used to recharge the batteries (one that is designed to shut off automatically once the batteries are fully charged.)
- Do not recharge near an open flame or any source of ignition.
- Before cleaning up any spills, be sure to pour baking soda on all battery acid fluid first.
- If skin comes into contact with battery acid, be sure to wash thoroughly with cool water.
- Disconnect all battery charger cords before using the golf cart.

Notes: