

Location _____ Trainer _____ Date _____

AVOIDING VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

They come at you from every direction. You are cruising at 50 mph in the through lane of the interstate; traffic is moderate. All at once the guy on your left, who has held that same position for the last mile or so, decides to exit using the ramp on the right side of the highway. He doesn't look first; he just shoots toward the ramp. What do you do?

- A. Drive right over him
- B. Pray
- C. Cover your eyes, *then* pray
- D. None of the above

Chances are, you are going to be involved in an accident that cannot be avoided. But is it an unavoidable accident? Think for a minute. What **COULD** you have done to avoid the accident? How many things could you list that you could have done to change the circumstances? The easy answer is to say the other driver shouldn't have cut in front of you. Remember, you cannot control other drivers, but you can influence them.

It is no longer enough to drive defensively. Today's driving demands more skill, more knowledge and more decision-making ability. Instead, you must drive decisively, which mandates sufficient skill and knowledge to make the right decisions and to make them at the right time. A review of all accidents will reveal that most accidents could have been avoided by taking proper actions at the right time, which is long before the emergency situation occurs.

In the example, there are some who would drive right over him, but that surely isn't the right answer. Unfortunately there are far too many who depend on faith because they don't have the knowledge and skill necessary to make the right decision.

These maneuvers might have prevented the accident:

- You shouldn't have been there at the same time he was. He was not only on your left for the last mile or so, but you were also on his immediate right for the same distance. You could see him better than he could see you. You should not drive close to any other vehicle for any extended period of time. You forgot the very important principle called space cushion driving.
- You should have seen the off-ramp before he did. You should always recognize the hazard because you are the professional. You could have slowed down just a little before you got to the ramp. Just a couple of miles per hour could have made the difference.
- What about that ramp? Why didn't you take it? Getting off and coming back on takes a little time and you lose a few rpm, but anything is better than an accident. You forgot another very important driving principle. You forgot to **PLAN AN ESCAPE ROUTE**. The escape route was there; it didn't take any real planning. You just didn't use it.

Be honest. Were you really paying close attention? Did you really know that car was there? Did you forget that other important principle necessary for long life: stay alert to stay alive.