

Learn to drive the AA Way

Hazard Perception and Response Checklist

Whenever you're driving it's important to continuously search and scan the environment around you for potential hazards and take appropriate steps to minimise the risks they present. While you're learning to drive, practise identifying hazards out loud and saying what you're doing to minimise the risks. That way your instructor and supervisor can work with you to keep you safe.

□ **Be focused, calm, careful and on top of your game**

Try to avoid distractions inside and outside the car. So keep the music and chatter low, keep your mind on the job by not thinking about other things going on in your life, and try not to focus on things outside like advertising signs, a group of friends, shop windows or the animals in the paddock you're passing.

□ **Continuously check your surroundings**

Keep checking your mirrors, and move your head to scan left and right if you need to. Remember to check your blind spot before pulling out of a park, overtaking or opening your door into passing traffic.

□ **Know what to look for**

The AA's New Zealand Defensive Driving Course helps you to practise identifying hazards by using a fun online driving programme called eDrive. It's like being behind the wheel. The course recommends you think about these five areas:

- **Vehicle** - Do a walk around before heading off to visually check tyres. Get a friend to check the brake lights and indicators for you from time to time, or try them out in a dark garage. Allow time to get to know a new vehicle and its controls.
- **Road** - Slow down and drive to the road conditions. In built up areas increase your side to side scanning. Keep to the sign posted speed limit for road works. Even if no work seems to be happening, sometimes it's just because the road gets very narrow or the road surface is about to get very rough.

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- **Traffic** - Share the road nicely. Adjust your speed and travel time to the conditions. Remember the two and four second following rules. If a vehicle is overtaking, slow a little to make it easier for them. If a car is following dangerously close, pull over when it is safe to do so and let them pass. If children are about, slow down, keep a close eye on them while you scan and be ready to react.
- **Light** - Turn on your lights in low-light conditions or if oncoming vehicles might have the sun in their eyes and struggle to see you. Wear sunglasses when it's glary. Slow down if you think you might be about to get sun-strike. Keep your windscreen clean. Take extra care at night.
- **Weather** - Adjust your speed and travel time expectations to suit the weather. Check the forecast and road reports before taking long journeys. If it doesn't feel safe to drive, then don't.