



Royal Rangers

Merit Requirements: Silver-Bordered Merit

TRAFFIC SAFETY MERIT

1. Obtain a Department of Vehicle (DMV) Handbook from your state and define the following:

- Personal attitude while behind the wheel
- Gridlock and how it changes driving conditions
- Tailgating
- Defensive driving; explain it and how to apply this technique
- Understanding Right of way laws; when to yield to others, when to take your turn
- Buckling up seat belts for everyone in the vehicle
- Keep your eyes moving
- Basic Speed Law
- Following Distance Rule; and, as speed changes, how should the following distance change
- Driver's Blind spots
- Various weather conditions and the affect upon traffic and speed of the vehicle

2. Write a 250-word essay about how the driving considerations in Requirement 1 can be used to drive safely.

3. Complete the following using your state driving handbook as a reference.

- a. Examine stopping distances, including reaction time, for the various speed conditions. Do this for an average car, and also for a truck. Go out along the side of a roadway (preferably a residential area) with a measuring tape, and mark off these distances. Place some marker (a box, a stake, a cone, etc.) at each end of this distance. Report additional allowances for bad weather. How does this information affect the way you drive? Explain in writing.
- c. Site what the DMV reports as being the top problems for drivers 15 to 19 years old. Include statistics of traffic violations and traffic deaths.

4. List at least six safety checks that should be done on a vehicle regularly to reduce accident problems.

5. With a commander perform the checks on a vehicle that you listed in requirement #4. Explain to him why these checks are important to traffic safety. How often should these safety checks be done?

6. In writing, state why the tire pressure and treads on a tire are an important factor in preventing accidents? If tire pressure is too low, what can this affect? If too high, what can this affect?

7. Do each the following:

- a. Check the tire pressure on a vehicle (with an adult present). Include the spare tire. On the sidewall of the tire, it should indicate what the tire pressure should be. Inflate the tires, if necessary, being careful to not over-inflate - (which can cause the tire and/or rim to explode).
- b. Use a penny as a gauge and check the tire-tread wear. (When putting the penny put the top of Lincoln's head in first and if his head is fully visible, the tire needs replacing).
- c. Look for abnormal tire-wear patterns such as: the tire wearing on one side more than another, bumps or divots in parts of the tread wear, wearing more in the center (or on the outer sides of the tread). These wear patterns are symptoms of vehicle problems. Find out what causes these wear patterns and how they affect the handling of the car. Also, explain, in writing, why it is an important traffic safety issue.
- d. Check for nails or other matter that might be imbedded in the tire. Why is this important?

8. Contact the Federal Highway Safety Administration (FHWA) and find out what traffic safety issues they are currently dealing with. Website: safety.fhwa.dot.gov, or write: Federal Highway Administration, Safety, 400 7th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20590. Report how much funding is allocated to Traffic Safety issues at the government level.
9. Collect ten articles on traffic accidents. Do the following for each:
 - a. What did the newspaper reporter say about what caused the accident? (It may be reported in subsequent editions of the newspaper).
 - b. Was there any traffic violations or perhaps misjudgments on the part of one of the drivers?
 - c. If there were fatalities, could that have been prevented by wearing a seat belt?
 - d. Explain how this accident could have been prevented.
10. Collect five newspaper articles on traffic accidents. List the following for each accident:
 - a. The cause of the accident. Follow-up articles may provide the information.
 - b. Any traffic violations that contributed to the accident.
 - c. Any fatalities and injuries.
 - d. Whether or not the person injured or killed in the accident was wearing a seat belt.
 - e. How each accident happened and whether it could have been prevented.
11. Complete the following items for bicycle safety:
 - a. Demonstrate at least four common bicycle safety road rules to your commander.
 - b. List the helmet laws for riding a bicycle in your state.
 - c. List any bicycle-related accidents that have occurred in your area.
 - d. Describe how to be visible on a bicycle during daylight and at nighttime.
12. Explain to your commander why combining drug and alcohol use with driving is a serious problem.
13. Obtain automobile crash test results and rollover statistics on at least ten makes of vehicles. List the vehicle that you believe would be the safest to own of those for which you have statistics.
14. Do ONE of the following:
 - a. Make a list of any dangerous intersections or traffic problems in your area where there have been a number of accidents. Include the number of accidents that have occurred at these intersections over a six-month period. List any injuries and fatalities that have occurred in these accidents. Describe why these intersections are dangerous and what corrections, if any, are planned to improve the safety situation.
 - b. Perform a traffic study at a busy intersection in your area by doing the following:
 1. On the first day, record how many vehicles go through this intersection (all four directions) for three one-hour slots: during the morning rush hour, lunchtime, and evening rush hour. Include the type of vehicles (cars, SUVs, or trucks) that go through this intersection in your record.
 2. For the next three days, record the following for a two-hour period.
 - a. The number of vehicles that go through a red light
 - b. The number of vehicles that appear to be speeding
 - c. The number of aggressive drivers
 - d. Any near-accidents with other vehicles or pedestrians
 - e. Any unsafe lane changes
 3. List the traffic fines for going through a red light and speeding in your area.
 - c. Participate in a "ride-along" program with your local police, if available in your area.
 1. Keep a log of all traffic-violations. Record what the driver was stopped for and whether or not a ticket was issued.
 2. List any traffic accidents that were investigated. Record the cause of the accident, any injuries or fatalities, and any tickets issued.
 3. Interview the officer with whom you are riding, listing the officer's likes and dislikes about the job.
 4. List any situation that the officer would like to see improved relative to traffic safety.
 5. Describe what you have learned about being a police officer after the ride-along session.
 - d. Contact a local insurance agent in your area to obtain the following information:
 1. List the company's efforts to improve traffic safety in your local area or state.
 2. List any recent rules or regulations adopted in your state that were influenced by the insurance industry.
 3. List two national agencies that have influenced traffic or motor vehicle safety laws. Describe each agency's main focus.