



VEHICLE *SAFETY BASICS*

8th Grade Curriculum



What Makes a Vehicle “Safe”?



FYI — safety isn't
just about seat belts.

Your car has tools that can
help you make decisions
to help keep you safe.

Let's break down how
it all works.



Seat Belts:

Your First Line of Defense

Of course, seat belts are the simplest and most effective safety feature in any vehicle.

Buckle up before you start up!

SEAT BELTS:

- Prevent you from flying forward in a crash.
- Protect your head, spine and organs.
- Work WITH airbags, not replace them.
- Should be over your shoulder, across your chest, and low and snug across your hips.

Airbags

The Backup System

Airbags add protection by rapidly inflating on impact to cushion your body — but they only work correctly when you're buckled up.





Adjust your seat so that you're **10 INCHES** from your driver's side airbag for safety. This distance is measured from the center of the steering wheel to your breastbone.

Sit back from the steering wheel or dashboard — **DON'T LEAN FORWARD**, and never put your feet on the dash!

Mirrors Help You See More

No matter how good your reflexes are, you can't react to what you can't see!

Rearview mirror = what's behind you

- Adjust so you can see the entire rear window from the driver's seat. You should only have to move your eyes.

Adjust your
mirrors **BEFORE**
you start driving.





Side-view mirrors = what's next to you

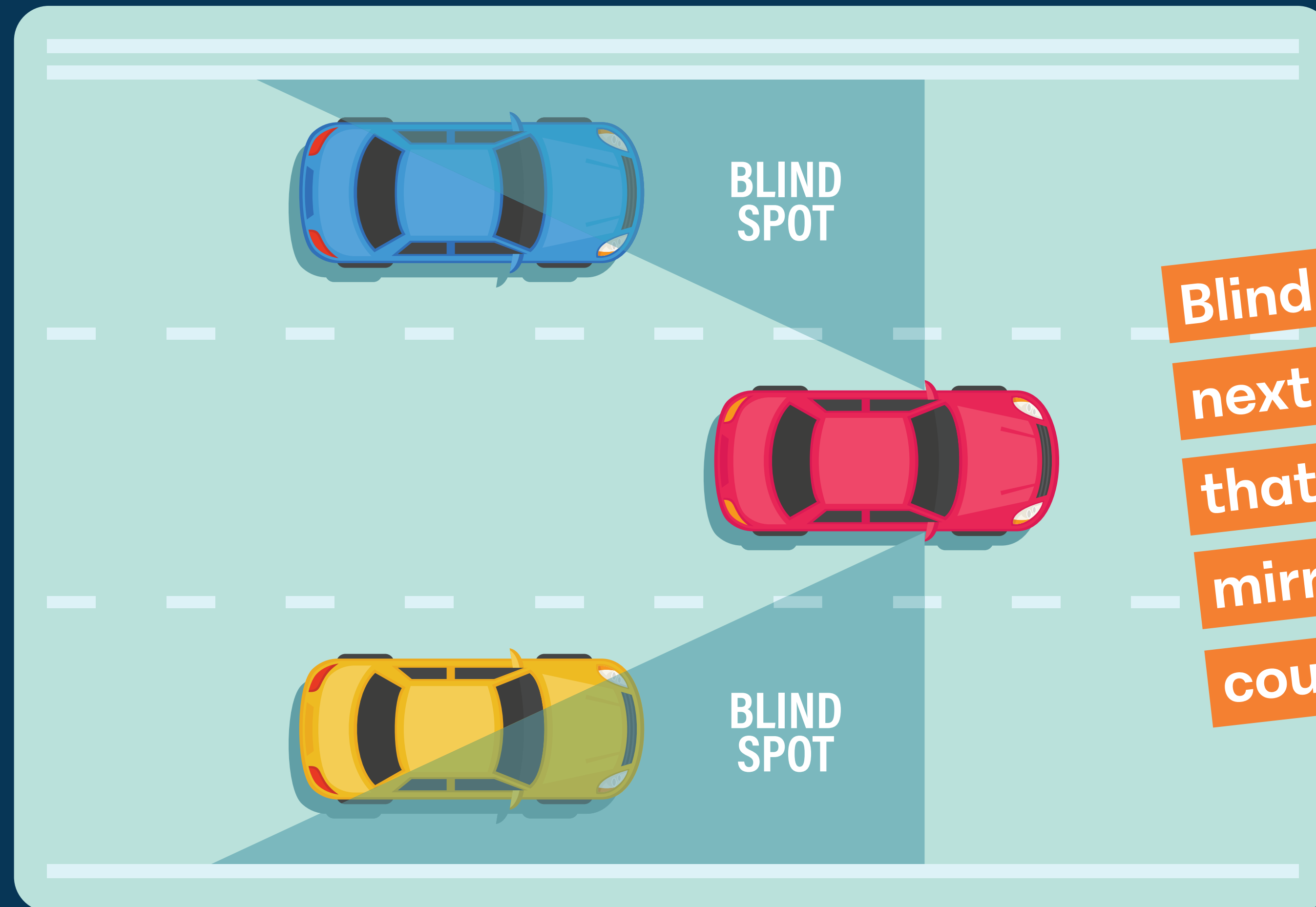
- To adjust the **driver's side-view mirror**, place your head against the left side window and set the mirror so you can just barely see the side of the car on the mirror's right side.
- To adjust the **passenger's side-view mirror**, position your head so that it is just above the center console. Set the mirror so you can just barely see the side of the car on the left side of the mirror.



DO NOT hang items from your mirror or clutter up the view through the windshield with decals.

REMEMBER, objects may be closer than they appear in the mirror, and mirrors don't show objects in your blind spots.

BLIND SPOTS = HIDDEN DANGER



Blind spots are areas next to or behind your car that aren't visible in your mirrors. Missing them could lead to a crash.



Always check over your shoulder
before changing lanes — don't
just trust your mirrors!

Do not drive on either side or
slightly behind other vehicles.

When passing another vehicle, do
not stay in another driver's blind spot.

Never stay alongside a large vehicle
such as a tractor-trailer or bus.

Get out of the other driver's
blind spot as soon as possible
by speeding up or slowing down.



Backing Up

It can be difficult to get a clear view behind your vehicle. When backing up, you should:

- Check behind your vehicle before you get in. Children or small objects cannot be seen from the driver's seat.
- Place your right arm over the back of the passenger seat and turn your body so you can look directly through the rear and side windows. Do not depend on your mirrors, as you cannot see directly behind your vehicle.

Backing Up

- Back slowly. Your vehicle is harder to steer while you are backing.
- While some vehicles have backup cameras, you should primarily rely on your own eyes.





Braking System

Having brakes in **GOOD WORKING CONDITION** is really important in preventing crashes.

If you notice any of these brake problems, take your vehicle to a licensed mechanic for an inspection:

- You hear a noise from underneath the vehicle when you press the brake pedal.
- You smell a bad smell during heavy braking.
- The vehicle doesn't brake immediately when you press the brake pedal.



Lights

Working lights are also very important for your safety.

Every once in a while, check your turn signals, brake lights, taillights and headlights.

HEADLIGHTS help you see at night and help others see you. Here's how to use them:



Use headlights on rainy, snowy or foggy days so others can see you. Arkansas law requires drivers to turn on their headlights when windshield wipers are needed.

Turn on your headlights anytime you cannot see a person or object clearly within 500 feet.

Use low-beam headlights when following another vehicle closer than 200 feet.

High-beam headlights are twice as bright as low-beams. Only use them when there are no oncoming vehicles or vehicles in front of you.

Some vehicles have fog lights that may be better suited to use in fog, rain or snow.

To Honk or **NOT** to Honk?

Your horn should only be used to alert other road users of potential danger.



USE YOUR HORN

- ✓ A person on foot or on a bike appears to be moving into your path.
- ✓ You are passing a driver who starts to move or turn into your lane.
- ✓ A driver isn't paying attention and doesn't see you.
- ✓ You are approaching a location where you cannot see what is ahead, like a steep hill.
- ✓ You lose control of your vehicle and you are moving into oncoming traffic or in the direction of pedestrians.

DON'T USE YOUR HORN

- × To encourage other vehicles to speed up.
- × To inform other drivers of a mistake.
- × To greet a friend on the road.
- × Near blind pedestrians.

Hazard Lights

Hazard lights, or emergency flashers, alert others that something's wrong so they can give you space.

- Turn them on if your car breaks down.
- Use them if you're pulled over and need to warn other drivers.
- Don't use them while driving unless you're moving very slowly for a reason, like a flat tire.



Windshield and Wipers



The windshield of your car ensures your safety while driving. You should always keep your windshield clean.

If you get a **CHIP OR CRACK** in your windshield, you should replace or repair it as soon as possible. Damaged glass can break more easily in a minor collision or when an object hits the windshield.

Wiper blades should be replaced every **SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR** or as soon as you notice a difference in visibility.

Tires

Keeping your tires in good shape is essential for your safety. Check your vehicle manual for specifics about your tires and follow these guidelines:

- Maintain proper tire pressure.
- Don't carry more weight in your vehicle than your tires can safely handle.
- Avoid road hazards, like potholes.
- Inspect tires for cuts, slashes and other irregularities.



Check Tire Treads

- In general, tires are not safe and should be replaced when the tread is worn down to 1/16 of an inch.
- A method for checking tread depth is to place a penny in the tread with Lincoln's head upside down and facing you. If you can see the top of Lincoln's head, you are ready for new tires.

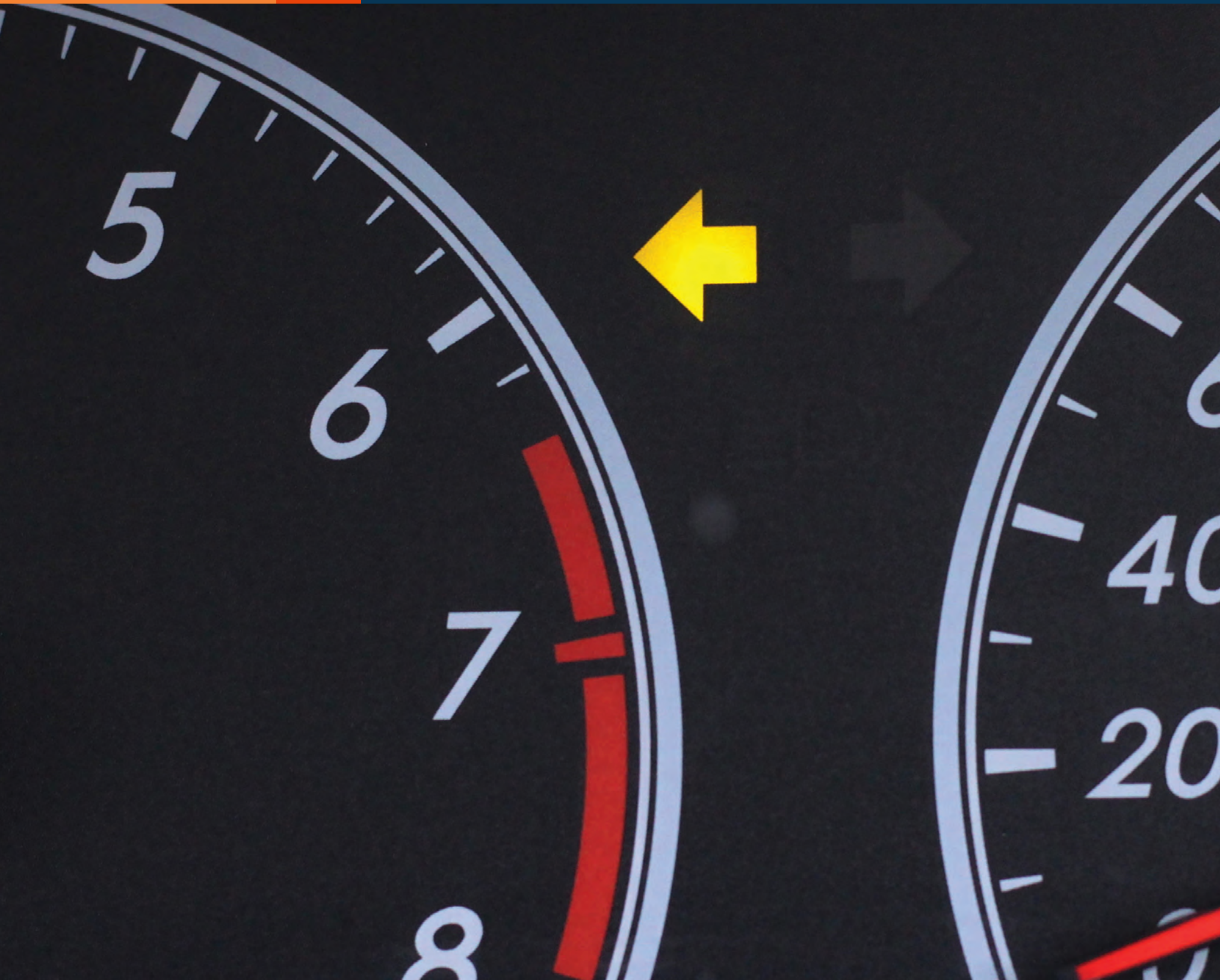


Exhaust System

Your vehicle's exhaust system removes toxic gases, helps cool the hot gases and reduces noise from the running engine.

NEVER allow the engine to idle in your garage or another enclosed area. Fumes from a car exhaust can cause death in a very short time!

Talk with Your Blinker



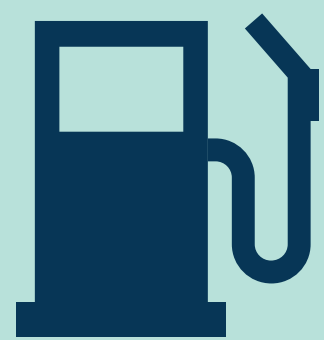
Other drivers can't read your mind! Turn signals or "blinkers" show what you're planning to do. You should warn other drivers you are going to change directions.

- Use before turning, merging into traffic or changing lanes.
- Signal early — if possible, you should signal your intentions to turn at least 100 feet before a turn.
- Turn them off after you're done. A false turn signal is unsafe.

Vehicle Maintenance – *Stay Road Ready*

A well-maintained car is a safer car. Stay on top of regular maintenance, like oil changes, tire rotations and brake checks.

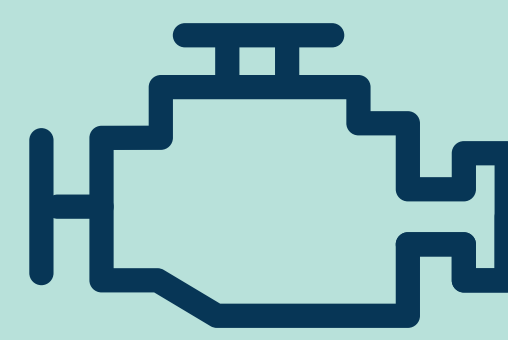
And those little lights on your dashboard? They tell you something's up! Don't ignore them — get help from an adult or check your manual.



Low
Fuel



Tire
Pressure



Check
Engine

**MAINT
REQD**

Maintenance
Required

NOW THAT'S STREET SMART!

What part of vehicle
safety do you think
most people forget?

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