Road Observation Checklist

Keep Observers Involved
Observation time only counts as instruction if observer students are learning. Simply riding around in a truck will not produce learning. The purpose in having the observer students record and critique driver performance is to keep them involved in the learning process. Actually, in early on-street lessons, most of the learning will occur while students are observers. Not having to cope with the task of maneuvering the vehicle, they are able to better observe, evaluate, and analyze the overall driving environment.

To make sure observers are paying attention and profiting from street lessons, you should call upon individual students to point out driver errors and to suggest what would have been appropriate responses. This will help keep nonparticipating students from hiding behind the observations of their fellow students.

Exploit Behavior of Other Drivers
The street environment offers an endless opportunity to witness more driver errors. Other drivers will generally exhibit a far wider range of mistakes than will the supervised student. Instructors can take advantage of these errors by having observers point them out when they occur and having students identify the effect that these errors could have upon other motorists, including themselves.
# Road Student Observation Checklist

Place a tally mark in the check box if a driver makes a driving error in one of the categories below

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<th>Criteria</th>
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Road Observer’s Checklist

Explanation of Driver’s Space Management Checklist

Separation

- **Following Distance** – not allowing the proper number of seconds in following distance for vehicle length and speed involved.
- **Lateral Separation** – failure to maintain a center lane position when oncoming or overtaking vehicles.
- **Passing Distance** – changing lanes (returning to the right lane) too quickly in front of a vehicle that has passed.
- **Overhead Clearance** – having to be stopped by the instructor to prevent collision with an overhead object.

Lane Use

- **Upgrade** – impeding other traffic by failure to enter the right-most lane on an upgrade.
- **Multi-lane Roads** – failure to enter the lane most appropriate to the truck speed and intended maneuver.
- **Cross Streets** – attempting to traverse or enter a cross street when there is insufficient space to accommodate the tractor-trailer.
- **Right Turn** – swinging left too far or too early and failing to close off the right side to overtaking traffic.
- **Left Turn** – swinging right before starting turn, (buttonhook where unnecessary) or cutting diagonally across the intersection
- **Multi-lane Turns** – using inside lane where traffic turns in two lane

Gaps

- **Too close** – attempting to cross or enter an insufficient gap.
- **Too far** – passing up an acceptable opportunity to cross or enter traffic.

Merging

- **Barging** – causing a vehicle to alter speed/direction in order to avoid an accident during a merge attempt.
- **Stopping** – slowing or stopping when an earlier speed adjustment would have permitted a continuous merge.
- **Alignment** – not aligning rig parallel to highway for options rear vision.

Traffic Adjustments

- **Compromising** – passing two potential hazards simultaneously when a speed adjustment would have allowed them to be passed in sequence.
- **Adjustment Operation** – unnecessarily prolonged operation alongside an adjacent vehicle or vehicles

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Explanation of Driver’s Visual Search Errors Checklist

Distance scanning – Failure to respond to a visible requirement for a speed or direction, change, at least 12 seconds in advance. Situations would include the following:

- Red light
- Red flashing light
- Warning sign

Lane drop
Barricade or other obstruction
Parked vehicle (in travel lane)

**Turn Path Search** -- Failure to search the path ahead in a right or left turn.

**Roadside Scanning** -- Failure to respond to signs over or alongside the road, including:

- Posted speed limits
- Lane control signs and signals
- Warning signs

**Blind Intersection, Privileged**- Failure to slow and search for cross traffic when approaching a blind intersection as the privileged (having the right-of-way).

**Mirror Usage, General** Failure to observe right and left rearview mirror at least every 5-8 seconds.

**Mirror Usage, Slowing** -- Failure to check the right and left rearview mirrors before slowing where following drivers would not anticipate it (e.g., tight turn, parallel parking).

**Mirror Lane Change** -- Failure to use the rearview mirror in the direction the lane change is to be made before initiating the lane change.

**Mirror, Merge** -- Insufficient or excessive monitoring of rearview mirror prior to merging onto a highway from an access or acceleration lane.

**Positioning, Merge** -- Failure to align the tractor and trailer sufficiently parallel to the main highway to be able to observe through traffic on the main roadway prior to a verge.
Explaination of Driver’s Communication Errors Checklist

**Signaling Turns**  Errors in signaling right and left turns at intersections

- **None**  -- Failure to activate the signal at any point in the turn.
- **Late**  -- Failure to activate the signal before reaching the intersection.
- **Early**  -- Misreading other road users by an early signal.

**Canceling**  -- Failure to cancel a signal property

- **Late**  -- Canceling more than 5 seconds after a turn is completed.
- **Early**  -- Canceling the signal while in a turn.

**Lane Changing**  -- Errors in signaling lane changes

- **None**  -- Failure to activate the signal at any point in the lane change.
- **Late**  -- Failure to activate signal soon enough before starting lane change.
- **Inappropriate Signaling**  -- A lane change when there is no gap to move into and enough time to wait for a gap to appear.

**Position**  -- Failure to use vehicle position to communicate intention to change lanes

- **Flashers**  -- Failure to activate emergency flashers when slowing or stopped as provided for by state law.
- **Brake Lights**  -- Failure to flash brake lights when slowing or stopping unexpectedly, including:
  - Stalled traffic ahead
  - Midblock (e.g., alley)
  - Prior to parallel parking

**Use of Horn**  -- Errors in using electric or air horns

- **Insufficient**  -- Failure to use horn under appropriate circumstances
- **Improper**  -- Using the horn improperly or using the wrong horn

**Interpreting Communication**  -- Errors involving recognition and interpretation of communication from others.

- **Receiving**  -- Failure to react and adjust to communications of others
- **Misinterpreting**  -- Misinterpreting communications from reacting accordingly,
Explanation of Driver’s Basic Control Errors

**Acceleration** -- Jerky and abrupt from a standing start or when increasing speed.

**Flaking** -- Smooth controlled stop, no rebound of front end or sound of exhausting air.

**Stop Line** -- Stopping beyond stop line or other designated stopping point.

**Upshifting** -- includes the following errors:
- stalling
- operating out of the designated rpm range
- lugging
- delayed shift between gears (losing over 500 rpm)
- missed shift (having to drop back into another gears)
- gear clash

**Downshifting** -- includes the following errors:
- operating out of the designated rpm range
- gear/engine mismatch resulting in lurch as clutch is released
- delayed shift
- over or under revving between gears
- gear clash

**Uphill Operation** -- Includes the following errors:
- lugging (failure to shift soon enough)
- excessive loss of speed (having to reaccelerate on hill)
- roll-back when starting from a standing point

**Downhill Operation** -- Includes the following errors:
- starting down the hill in too high a gear
- falling to maintain steady brake pressure (e.g., fanning)

**Speed Adjustment Curves** -- Entering curve or turn too fast, indicated by:
- sharp lateral acceleration (passengers thrown sideways)
- braking while within the curve or turn

**Lane-Keeping/Straight** -- Wandering back and forth between lines or touching, crossing lane marking on straightaway

**Lane-Keeping/Turns** -- Operating outside of the designated lane in turns.
- Right Turn: right rear wheels cutting across curb or road edge
- Left Turn: beginning left turn too early (cutting across lanes approaching from the left)
- Curves: Wheels not kept Nathan lane markings, fails to steer far left/right to compensate for the off-tracking of the trailer

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Explanation of Driver Errors on the Night Operations Checklist

Light High Beams – Failure to return the lights to high beam after passing or overtaking another vehicle.
Lights Dimming – Failure to dim headlights according to law meeting or overtaking another road user.
Speed Adjustment – Failure to reduce speed at night where required because of lowered visibility.
Following Distance – Failure to increase following distance to compensate for reduced nighttime visibility.
Gap Selection – Acceptance of an insufficient gap when entering or crossing traffic where it can be attributed to reduced nighttime visibility.