

Defensive DRIVING SCHOOL



Dear Friend,

Thank you for requesting this **Consumer's Guide to Driving Schools**. You may be asking,

“Why do I need a Consumer's Guide to Driving Schools?”

You've probably noticed that there is general information about driving schools available from various sources. We have recognized, however, that there is **very little information specifically** for consumers that help pinpoint areas **YOU** need to be aware of, and that offers practical answers and advice.

In our dealings with thousands of people looking for driver's ed, the biggest problem we've seen is simply this: Some driving schools offer cut-rate instruction using outdated technology, and others change business names and locations to stay one step ahead of the Department of Licensing. Some schools are operated by investors whose motive is profit over quality instruction. It may seem like the easiest road to getting drivers education is to go with the cheapest school, but if you go that route, you may be in for an unhappy ride.

You probably need driver's education right now and are getting the same old story about how all the schools are the same, or you are having a difficult time determining which school will do the job right. We can help you get the right driving instruction so you or your teen will learn the skills to be ticket and collision free for life. If you have any questions or need assistance, give us a call or visit our web site.

Sincerely,

Defensive Driving School

Consumer's Guide to Driving Schools Checklist

Protect Yourself from Driving Schools Who Promise More than They Can Deliver!

Make sure your driving school meets these standards.*

* Following the checklist, see why each question is important.	Defensive Driving	School B	School C
1. Do they teach skills to be collision free for life?	Yes		
2. Does the curriculum <u>exceed</u> all WA State standards?	Yes		
3. Are parents able to ride along on in-car lesson(s)?	Yes		
4. Are there newer cars for behind the wheel driving instruction?	Yes		
5. Is there an online class schedule with secure enrollment?	Yes		
6. Do they have innovative and interactive classroom instruction led by qualified, experienced instructors?	Yes		
7. Do they have any Department of Licensing disciplinary actions?	No		
8. Are they a member in good standing with an independent organization where one can see if any complaints have ever been issued or gone unresolved?	Yes		
9. Are they under local family ownership?	Yes		
10. Is their primary focus on being the "cheapest" or "easiest?"	No		
11. Are private lessons available?	Yes		
12. Are actual people available to answer all questions?	Yes		
13. Can students take the DOL knowledge test in class?	Yes		
14. How long has the school been in business?	1945		



www.driving-school.com

Can Your Driving School Deliver What They Promise?

1. **Do they teach skills to be collision free for life?** – During a recent survey, the stated goal of many driving schools was to help students pass the Washington State Department of Licensing exams. While passing the exams is important, we also want our students to learn how to avoid accidents and be collision free for life. What sets us apart from other schools is that we use commentary driving to help students communicate the potential hazards they see before any problems occur.
2. **Does the curriculum exceed all WA State standards?** – Minimum “clock-hour” standards established by WA state are:
 - a. 30 hours of classroom instruction
 - b. 6 hours of behind the wheel instruction (1 hour may be substituted for 4 hours of driving simulation)
 - c. 1 hour observing another student driving

What is done during these times is most important. Our use of the newest classroom computer technology and innovative Defensive Driving techniques are designed to teach our students the skills to be collision free for life.

3. **Are parents able to ride along on in-car lesson(s)?** – We find that one of the best communication methods we have with parents is to let them ride along when we have room. Parents experience our techniques first hand and can use them when teaching their child. We also have a “Parents Session” in the classroom to make parents more aware of our curriculum.
4. **Are there newer cars for behind the wheel driving instruction?** – Newer cars are safer and match most parents’ cars. We also find that they are more practical from a maintenance standpoint. In addition, students and instructors enjoy driving newer cars more. In addition, over half of our fleet consists of gasoline electric hybrid vehicles.
5. **Is there an online class schedule with secure enrollment?** – We simplify the task of enrolling and scheduling by allowing you to sign up on our web site at www.driving-school.com.
6. **Do they have innovative and interactive classroom instruction led by qualified, experienced instructors?** – Our class instruction is led by instructors that average more than 10 years experience. We have more collective years of experience teaching than any other driving school in Washington. Each of our classrooms is equipped with computers and projectors which show high clarity visual aids and videos.
7. **Do they have any Department of Licensing disciplinary actions?** – The Washington State Department of Licensing disciplines schools and instructors who violate state regulations. You can see which schools and instructors have disciplinary actions at <http://www.dol.wa.gov>.
8. **Are they a member in good standing with an independent organization where one can see if any complaints have ever been issued or gone unresolved?** – Members of an organization that track customer complaints open themselves up for increased scrutiny. In addition, any disputes that may occur can be mediated through this type of organization. To check out a company with the Better Business Bureau, go to <http://www.bbb.org/>.

Can Your Driving School Deliver What They Promise? (con't)

Know the answers to these questions before you choose!

- 9. Are they under local family ownership?** – All of the shareholders of Defensive Driving School are members of the same family who live in King and Snohomish County. This is more than a business for us. Our family members use the same roads as our students. We have a vested interest in ensuring that we teach our students to drive safely and responsibly.
- 10. Is their primary focus on being the “cheapest” OR “easiest?”** – “Cheapest” is good if “service” is comparable. In the driving school business, every cost cutting technique tends to sacrifice quality. No one in their right mind would buy a cut-rate parachute, and saving money at a cut-rate driving school can also be very costly. Today, it’s difficult to have a fender-bender that costs less than \$500. How can you put a dollar value on an injury or death? A cut rate without quality instruction is a bad choice. Remember, all driving schools are not created equal.
- A large class with 35 or 40 students will tend to have discipline problems as well as a lot of noise. Some teenagers will be attracted to a school with a reputation for being easy (not much bookwork or testing). The wise parent will avoid such schools because their child’s life and the parent’s property are at stake.
- 11. Are private lessons available?** – Defensive Driving School, to the extent we are allowed to by the Department of Licensing, gives private driving lessons. Students are more at ease when there is no one else in the back seat.
- 12. Are actual people available to answer all questions?** – We staff our office during the business week and on Saturdays. Just call our toll free number (800 452 0402). Some of the other schools are not always staffed during business hours, so it may take a long time to get your questions answered.
- 13. Can teens take the DOL knowledge test in class?** – Defensive Driving School is able to offer the DOL knowledge test during class for any student who is under the age of 18 and taking a teen course. Not all driving schools are able to offer this since the school must be in good standing with the DOL to be allowed to participate in this program. During peak times this can save several hours of waiting at the Department of Licensing office.
- 14. How long has the school been in business?** – Defensive Driving School has been a major force in the Puget Sound since 1972. In 2003, we joined with Seattle Driving School (established in 1945), and in 2006 we joined forces with Kirshner Driving School (established in 1947). This heritage of continuous service to the community makes Defensive Driving School the longest established school in the Puget Sound. We are Seattle’s pioneer driving school. The founder of Seattle Driving School (Bob Malloy) was the very first certified driving instructor in Washington State with certificate #1. We’re proud of our history.



www.driving-school.com