



# I-P-D-E: A Safe Driving Formula

**Instructor Notes:** Last month I discussed the importance of keeping a wide field of vision while driving but scratched the surface on how to use it effectively. This month I am taking the next step and discussing a specific driving process that increases your driver's ability to manage space around their truck. Use this opportunity to share this important concept to avoid hazards before they become problems.

Driving is such a regular part of our lives that most of us often fall into a false sense of security and drive like we are "asleep at the wheel," but it's time to wake up. One great concept being taught across the country is the process of Identify, Predict, Decide, and Execute (IPDE). IPDE is an organized thinking and acting process that is the heart of defensive driving and something most of us do hundreds of times a day without thinking, but the problem is that some of us don't. So, to help yourself and the motorists you share the road with, we must breakdown this process to really make it work.

The four steps of the IPDE process are:

**I—Identify:** Locate potential hazards within your field of vision.

**P—Predict:** Judge where the possible points of conflict may occur.

**D—Decide:** Determine what action to take, when, and where to take it.

**E—Execute:** Act by maneuvering your truck to avoid conflicts.

## Identify

The first step of the IPDE process is to identify conditions

and situations around you and your truck. Look for specific clues that alert you to possible trouble, like a pedestrian approaching a corner, a child with a ball near the road, a car parking alongside the curb on your side of the road, or even if it snowed the night before. Beyond stationary objects or road conditions, also look for other users on the road that may not see you. Scanning in front of and around your truck allows you to systematically move through your field of vision looking for real and potential hazards. This is where distracted drivers are most at danger because they fail to identify problems and are often too late to avoid them when they do.

## Predict

The second step in the IPDE method is to predict what might happen should you encounter a hazard. This prediction occurs very fast and is based on your driving experience, so it makes sense that a veteran driver may have better predicting ability than a newer driver with limited experience. One example is if an oncoming vehicle drifts into your lane, you have a split second to predict whether the oncoming vehicle will continue toward your truck and, if so, what consequences

might occur. Looking through your crystal ball there are two probable outcomes; they correct themselves or you get out of their way.

## Decide

The third step in the IPDE method is to decide what evasive action you will implement (accelerate, steer, decelerate, or any combination) to avoid a crash. This process requires you to understand the need for necessary time and space to implement your "decided-upon" plan. Before you implement an avoidance maneuver, be certain that your chosen escape path or access space is available (leaving the roadway) if you have to implement a "less desirable" emergency avoidance maneuver.

## Execute

The last step in the IPDE method is to execute your plan. This process might range from slowing down and gently moving toward the left portion of your lane when approaching a disabled vehicle parked on the side of the road to implementing an emergency avoidance maneuver. Generally, your skill in implementing avoidance maneuvers will increase exponentially as your truck driving experience grows.

When you begin practicing the IPDE method you will generally be slow and will probably think in words. As you practice, you will become faster and begin to think in ideas and pictures. At this stage, you will be able to carry out the entire procedure rapidly and you will be able to cut your reaction time by taking the time to practice the IPDE method. Once you have been using IPDE for some time, much of your identifying, predicting, deciding and executing will be carried out instinctively.



This article is a part of TowSafe, a safety program designed for towing operators. For more information contact April at 407-706-6796.