



## Pre-Driving Check-List

CAA has developed a checklist of things to review to help drivers prepare their vehicle for a drive, to ensure their vehicle is adjusted perfectly. Print the checklist in its entirety and take it to your car. Keep a copy in the glove compartment and review it periodically. These simple adjustments can make anyone a safer driver!

### Make Sure Your Body is Positioned Properly

- You should be seated in a comfortable, upright position, squarely behind the steering wheel, with your head restraint adjusted so that the top of the restraint is at a point slightly above your ears and – if possible – within eight centimeters of the back of your head.
- The seat should be positioned so you can easily operate the accelerator and brake pedals without having to lift your heel from the floor.
- Sitting too close to the steering wheel interferes with steering, increases fatigue, causes stress and can injure you if the airbag deploys. Aim for about approximately 30 centimeters between the center of the steering wheel and your breastbone.
- When properly seated in the driver's seat, as described above, you should be able to see the ground within 4 to 5 metres to the front, one and one-half to two car widths to the right side, and one-half to one car width to the left side.

### Adjust the Steering Column

- In many vehicles, an adjustment lever on the underside of the steering column permits the driver to raise or lower it for better steering wheel angle and height.
- Some newer vehicles also have telescopic steering columns, allowing the driver to move the steering wheel closer to or farther from the dash.
- In vehicles equipped with a driver's-side air bag, sitting closer than 25 centimeters from the steering wheel increases risk of arm, neck or facial injury in a crash. Determine proper distance by extending your arm in front of you and adjusting the seat forward or back until the top of the steering wheel is in line with the palm of your hand.



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### Proper Hand Positioning

- Drivers should strive to maintain both hands on the steering wheel at all times.
- The position of hands on the steering wheel will vary, depending on steering wheel design, seat height and length of your arms and legs. You should be able to adjust the seat so your right hand rests at about 3 o'clock and your left hand rests around 9 o'clock, as on the face of a clock. This allows for optimum control of the steering wheel.
- Some drivers may prefer a lower hand position, closer to 8 o'clock and 4 o'clock, depending on personal preference and position of the steering wheel spokes.
- Mid- to low-hand positions will help drivers maintain symmetrical leverage on the steering wheel while minimizing chance of injury if the air bag deploys.
- You should grip the steering wheel gently but firmly, with your arms bent at the elbows.
- Hold the steering wheel by the outside of the rim, using both hands.
- For better control and feel, use your fingers instead of the palms of your hands and keep your thumbs up along the face of the steering wheel.

### Position Your Head Restraint

- Head restraints, which are often called head rests, reduce risk of neck injury due to whiplash from a rear-end collision.
- If your vehicle is equipped with adjustable head restraints, make sure they are properly positioned.
- Head restraints should be centered mid-ear level, and 6 centimeters or less from the back of your head.
- To reduce chance of injury, avoid leaning forward while you drive.
- Most drivers keep their head restraint too low. Be sure to check your head restraint and adjust it accordingly.



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### Adjusting Your Mirrors

It's extremely important that your mirrors are properly adjusted so that you have good sight lines behind and beside your vehicle. Here are some tips for ensuring your car mirrors are in the proper position. They should be adjusted each and every time you get into your car to drive.

#### The Inside Mirror

- Adjust the inside mirror so you can see the entire rear window from the driver's seat. You should have to move only your eyes, not your head, when using this mirror.

#### Side-view Mirrors

- 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 in 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 in the left side of the mirror. (If the vehicle is not equipped with remote mirror-adjustment controls, you may need assistance when adjusting this mirror.)

Before driving with these updated mirror settings, see how they work while your vehicle is parked. For example, you can park along a street, then see how passing vehicles move through your mirrors and peripheral vision. This can help you become oriented to the new settings before heading out into traffic.

Remember, even properly adjusted mirrors cannot eliminate all blind spots.



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### Adjusting Your Seat Belt

When properly adjusted, your seat belt is one of the most important safety features in your car. When worn properly, safety belts are comfortable, can reduce fatigue, and can also help to keep you alert.

- Sit up straight with your back firmly against the back of the seat.
- The lap portion of the belt should fit snugly across your hips and not be allowed to ride up on your abdomen.
- After fastening the belt, be sure to take up any slack.
- Never place the shoulder belt behind your back or under your arm.
- On many vehicles, there is a mechanism to adjust the shoulder height of the belt. Take advantage of this to position the belt for optimum comfort.