



# Driver Safety Program

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United States Province  
Priests of the Sacred Heart

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# Priests of the Sacred Heart

## **DRIVER SAFETY PROGRAM**

(Approved by Provincial Council 12/14/06)

### **Introduction**

Driving is a privilege conferred by the state in the form of a driver's license and recognized by the community in the use of a community-owned and insured vehicle. Just as the state expects drivers to obey relevant laws and rules of the road, so the community expects member drivers to cooperate with procedures designed to safeguard and serve the common good.

*The purpose of this "Driver Safety Program" is to help each SCJ drive for as long as possible within the primary consideration of all drivers - their own personal safety and the safety of others. For member drivers, this concern for safety comes in the context of community and the realization that the actions of individuals do have consequences for the entire community.*

Through the years, our community has been blessed with good drivers who take responsibility for observing traffic laws, cooperating with community procedures, and attending to vehicle maintenance. However, we need to take reasonable precautions in order to maintain this record of safety, continue to qualify for insurance coverage, and avoid possible lawsuits.

**Age, health, and performance** are the key factors influencing driver safety. Studies indicate that aging plays a critical part in decisions about whether to continue, limit, or cease driving. This is true because aging can affect key abilities related to driving - vision, hearing, physical reflexes, and mental attentiveness. Visual acuity tends to decline and sensitivity to light glare tends to increase with age. Hearing loss often accompanies aging. Age can lengthen the time it takes the brain to process information and can make it harder to ignore distractions.

Statistics show that drivers aged 55 and over are involved in more accidents per mile than those aged 30-54, and that the number of accidents per mile rises sharply at about age 75. The effects of aging do not apply equally to all individuals; therefore, the decision of

whether or not an individual can continue to drive needs to be made on a case-by-case basis.

**Health** is a second critical factor in temporary and permanent decisions about whether to continue, limit, or cease driving. Major surgeries, certain disease diagnoses, vision problems, hearing loss, limited mobility, or any condition that causes loss of consciousness or involuntary motion require honest personal assessment and consultation with others in determining if and when a SCJ may safely resume driving. In addition, drivers need to be cautious about prescription and over-the-counter drugs that cause drowsiness. Drug interactions, esp. between prescription and non-prescription drugs (including herbal medications), can affect alertness and one's ability to operate a vehicle safely.

Drivers in good health can also be subject to drowsiness caused by fatigue. All drivers need to be conscientious about giving driving their full attention while they are behind the wheel. Personal distractions, thinking about a previous or upcoming meeting, or talking on the phone while driving should be avoided as much as possible to insure safe driving.

**Performance** is the third key consideration affecting decisions about driving. A record of several accidents or moving traffic violations, as well as illegal actions involving driving, may lead to the immediate termination of driving privileges, temporarily or permanently.

## **Driver Safety Policies and Procedures**

To meet our responsibilities for safety and the common good, all drivers shall cooperate with the following driver safety procedures:

1. **All drivers shall provide a copy of their current drivers license to the province finance office.** At the time of the renewal of one's driver license a copy should be sent to the province finance office.
2. **All licensed drivers under age 70 are encouraged to attend a driver refresher course every five (5) years. Drivers over the age of 70 should attend a driver course every three (3) years.** Courses will occasionally be offered by Priests of the Sacred Heart. The business office will maintain a current list

of available driver courses to assist drivers in finding an appropriate course.

3. **In the calendar year following the year an SCJ celebrates his 75th birthday, the SCJ will take a yearly driving test to be administered by a tester recommended by the province insurer.** The Office of the Provincial Treasurer will oversee the policy.

Following the test, the tester will recommend to the provincial superior or his delegate one of the following:

- a. The SCJ continues to exercise a member's full driving privileges without restrictions;
- b. The SCJ refrain from the exercise of a member's driving privileges in certain circumstances (night driving, etc.);
- c. The SCJ is restricted from driving and member's driving privileges are revoked.

[Approved by the Provincial Council on October 26, 2009]

4. **HEALTH: At any age, a driver with a serious medical condition (temporary or permanent) will consult with his physician about his ability to drive safely and will not drive until given permission by his physician.** Serious conditions such as those outlined below may also prompt the local superior or treasurer to request a medical consult or a driving evaluation.

Conditions known to adversely affect driver safety include, but are not limited to, the following, unless or until a physician attests that surgical recovery has reached an appropriate stage or that these diseases or conditions are under control through medication or other compensating means (e.g., hearing aids, contact lenses):

Orthopedic, abdominal, cardiac, ocular, or other major surgeries;

Diagnoses of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, demen-

tia including early stage Alzheimer's disease;

Vision problems such as cataract, glaucoma, or macular degeneration;

Significant hearing loss;

Any condition involving seizures, loss of consciousness, recurrent dizziness, limited mobility, or involuntary motion.

5. **PERFORMANCE: Drivers of all at-fault accidents (including accidents where it is difficult or impossible to determine the fault) are required to participate in a professional driving evaluation.** Drivers with poor driving performance may also be asked by the local superior to take an additional driving refresher course or to take appropriate medical tests.

Other situations that may indicate a SCJ is a "safety concern" requiring a refresher course, a professional medical or driving evaluation, or an immediate termination of driving privileges include the following, although this is a non-exhaustive list:

3 moving violations within 3 years;

3 or more accidents within 3 years;

2 accidents in which the member driver was at fault within 2 years.

The second instance of DUI (driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs), hit and run, permitting an unlicensed person to drive a SCJ vehicle, driving on a suspended or revoked license or any criminal charge involving a vehicle will necessitate an immediate suspension of driving privileges and further evaluation or assessment.

All drivers will be asked to sign a disclosure granting the province finance office permission to obtain a Motor Vehicle Report from the State in which the SCJ resides.

6. **Frequent Car Accidents:** If an SCJ is over 70 and has been at fault in multiple motor vehicle accidents within a 12-month period of time, he will be required to undergo a professional evaluation of his driving ability before he is allowed to drive and/or purchase a new vehicle (if replacement is necessary). An at-fault accident can range from something as simple as a fender bender in a parking lot to the total destruction of a vehicle.

## **Motor Vehicle Report (MVR):** (Specific Information)

A driver will be considered as a “safety concern” if the MVR check indicates that, the driver has one or more of the following violations within the last 5 years:

1. Conviction for an alcohol and or drug related driving offense;
2. Refusal to submit to a Blood Alcohol Content Test;
3. Conviction for speeding in excess of 25 miles over posted limits (two or more times);
4. Conviction for Criminal Offense (negligent homicide, homicide by intoxicated use of a motor vehicle, hit and run, etc).

Or one or more of the following violations within the last 3 years:

1. Any combination of three or more moving violations or “At Fault Accidents” (meaning, an accident in which the driver is issued a moving violation ticket by a police officer );
2. Driving with a suspended or revocation license;
3. Leaving the scene of an accident as defined by state law
4. Reckless Driving.

Other violations incurred within the last 12 months: Any combination of three or more moving violations or “At Fault Accidents”.

A person who is designated as a “safety concern” requires the member to participate in a driver safety program, evaluation or testing procedure.

## **Driver Retirement**

### **Personal Decision:**

Who decides that the time has come for a SCJ to stop driving? The answer, in many cases, is the SCJ himself. This is the best situation, one coming from an honest assessment of one’s skills and recognition of one’s responsibility for personal safety, the safety of others, and the good of the community.

Often this decision comes after a period of self-limited driving during which a SCJ has addressed his responsibility for safe driving by eliminating night driving, long distance driving, bad weather driving or rush hour driving, etc. In other words, he has restricted his driving to avoid situations that make him nervous and therefore more likely to be involved in an accident.

### **SCJs or Friends:**

Sometimes, a driver needs the assistance of others to recognize the value of limiting his driving or to come to the difficult decision to stop driving. Friends, community members, and others in a position to observe a SCJ’s driving ability should express their concern to the SCJ. Suggestions about taking a safe driver or defensive driving course may lead the SCJ to a more objective assessment of his skills. Conversations exploring the possibility that certain health concerns may be affecting a SCJ’s abilities may lead to consultation with a physician and medical testing/remediation. Kindness, tact and empathy, combined with clarity and truth telling, can help a SCJ open himself to the possibility of limiting or ending his driving.

### **Provincial:**

Occasionally, direct intervention by the provincial may be required when a local superior cannot resolve a question of restricting or terminating driving privileges, temporarily or permanently. Such direct intervention usually comes after SCJs’ and friends’ expressions of concern about a SCJ’s driving safety have been unsuccessful in persuading him to take corrective action and the superior is unable to resolve the issue on a local level.

## Photo Identification Card:

Once a SCJ will no longer be driving, he should obtain a government-issued photo ID to replace his driver's license. Most local driver's license facilities offer this service at minimal cost. It is best to obtain the photo ID before a driver's license expires because a valid driver's license will provide the proof of identity required for issuance of a state ID card.

## Driver Responsibilities

### Use of Vehicle:

The Priests of the Sacred Heart are proactive with respect to safe driving habits and have adopted the following safety procedures for the operation of all of their motor vehicles by members of the order:

1. **Vehicle Safety Belts:** The driver and all occupants of a vehicle are required to wear safety belts when operating or riding in a motor vehicle. The driver is responsible to ensure all passengers are wearing their safety belts.
2. **Impaired Driving:** A driver may not operate a motor vehicle at any time, when his ability is impaired, affected or influenced by alcohol, illegal drugs, medication, illness, fatigue or injury.
3. **Traffic Laws:** All drivers are required to abide by all federal, state and local motor vehicle regulations, laws and ordinances.
4. **Registration:** to retain in the vehicle they use those papers (e.g. insurance card, copy of vehicle registration, etc) required by the state and to apply the yearly registration sticker to the license tag before the expiration of the previous sticker;
5. **Vehicle Condition:** All drivers are responsible for ensuring that the motor vehicle is maintained in safe driving condition. Communicate with the province finance office regarding major repairs and concerns about replacing the vehicle;



6. **Headlights On Requirement:** Drivers are required to drive with vehicle headlights on at all times.
7. **Use of Cell Phones and other Equipment:** There are risks associated with the use of cellular phones and other electronic equipment while operating a motor vehicle. Responding to pagers, using a laptop computer while driving and dialing or receiving phone calls are potentially dangerous activities and are prohibited. Use of hands free cell phones is allowed if not restricted by State law.
8. **Additional Safety Rules:** Drivers should exercise prudence when allowing non-members of the community to use our vehicles.

## Accidents

For your own protection and for the protection of the community, as well as for complying with legal and insurance requirements, drivers are required to report all accidents.

Never leave the scene of an accident until the exchange of basic information, as outlined on the insurance card carried by each driver, has been completed.

A police report should be filed in accord with the state law whenever an accident involves another vehicle, other persons, public property, or any property not belonging to Priests of the Sacred Heart. A police report is required by the insurance company for any insurance claim filed.

Drivers are also required to report all accidents to the person designated in the province finance office (currently, Kevin Stanke), to complete the accident form provided by the finance office, and to submit it to the designated person as soon as possible.

## **Local Superior**

The local superior will be the person responsible for monitoring driver safety in each community setting. Should questions arise concerning the driving activities of any member of his community he should contact the Province Treasurer for assistance.



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[www.dehoniansusa.org](http://www.dehoniansusa.org)