

INTRODUCTION

Driving in the entertainment industry can be the same and different from regular driving, depending on the task. Some driving will involve basically getting from point A to B for a television or film shoot, scouting, etc. While some driving will be for actual film or television shots. Whatever the reason, driving can expose both cast and crew to potential dangers if certain safety precautions are not followed. In this lesson, we will cover some of the potential dangers involved with both types of driving, some basic driving safety tips for when you are regularly driving, and some safety tips for when “free driving” is being conducted.



DANGERS THAT YOU COULD BE EXPOSED TO WHEN DRIVING

Whether you are conducting normal driving duties or are “free driving,” you and others could be exposed to one or more of the following dangers:

- Striking pedestrians, crew members, or bystanders
- Striking stationary objects
- Striking other vehicles either while in motion or when they are stationary
- Hydroplaning or skidding on wet or slippery roads

BASIC SAFETY TIPS FOR NORMAL DRIVING ACTIVITIES

When you are out on a normal road, performing normal driving activities, you should do the following:

- Make sure that you are well-rested before getting behind the wheel.
 - Driving while tired can increase your chances of an accident occurring because your reaction time can be delayed.
- Do NOT drive if you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
 - If you are planning to or have partaken of alcoholic beverages, it is recommended that you find another method of transportation rather than getting behind the wheel.
- Inspect your vehicle for signs of damaged or malfunctioning parts.
 - If something is damaged or malfunctioning, make sure that you get it fixed as soon as possible.
 - If you are driving a studio or company vehicle, report any vehicles that have damaged or malfunctioning parts to your supervisor or other designated personnel.
 - Do NOT drive studio or company vehicles that do NOT pass inspection.
- Check the tread on your tires to make sure that they are in good condition.
 - If your tires have low to no tread, you should replace them, as tread helps your vehicle grip the road.
- Make sure that your mirrors are properly positioned to see the vehicles around you properly.
- Where feasible, make sure that you have a breakdown kit ready to go in the vehicle in the event of a breakdown.
- If you will be transporting cargo, make sure that it is properly secured either in or on the vehicle.
- Always buckle up when you are in the vehicle.
- Obey all posted speed limits and all other rules of the road.
 - Remember to slow down in bad weather or when road conditions are not ideal.
- Maintain at least a 3-second distance between your vehicle and those that are in front of you.
 - If there are inclement weather conditions, this distance should be increased to keep a safe distance between the vehicles.



ENTERTAINMENT: DRIVING SAFETY

- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Do NOT drive distracted.
 - If you need to eat, drink, answer a phone call, or send a text, experts recommend that you pull over to a safe area before completing the other task.
 - Where feasible, limit in-car conversations, as speaking with passengers when you are the driver could take your attention away from the road.

SAFETY TIPS WHEN FREE DRIVING

For film and television, actors or other trained crew members may be asked to perform “free driving.” Free driving is where camera equipment will be mounted to the vehicle to get certain vehicle shots.

Additionally, depending on the shot involved, the vehicle may be operated by a pod that is mounted on the vehicle, or the vehicle may be secured to a trailer that will pull it along for the scene.

Please note that for scenes that will be shot on public roads, certain permits and other permissions may need to be obtained from the local and/or state authorities. Make sure that all required paperwork and traffic control measures are completed prior to filming the scene.

Where you will be conducting free driving, you should do the following:

- Only allow qualified and licensed drivers to drive vehicles for shots.
 - Qualified drivers may be required to drive the vehicle from a mounted pod, while actors sit within the vehicle. If you have questions regarding pod driving, please speak with the stunt coordinator and director.
- Make sure that you attend the safety briefing for the scene.
 - If you have questions about the scene, please speak with the director and stunt coordinator.
 - Vehicles may have to be customized for the shot, so safety features that may normally come with the vehicle may have been modified or removed. If you have any questions about vehicle modifications, please speak with the stunt coordinator.
 - Vehicle modifications should only be completed by a person who is trained, qualified, and authorized to do so.
- Become familiar with the operation of the vehicle.
 - Make sure that you are comfortable with what driving techniques are being requested for the scene by attending all rehearsals. If you have any concerns about the driving techniques being requested of you, please speak with the stunt coordinator and director.
- Inspect any equipment that will be rigged to the vehicle for signs of worn or damaged parts.
 - Report worn or damaged rigging equipment to the proper department head.
 - Do NOT use any worn or damaged rigging equipment to secure cameras, pods, or anything else to the vehicle.
- Make sure that all rigged equipment has been rigged to the vehicle in accordance with the production’s policies and procedures.
 - Assure that any mounted equipment will not be obstructing the view of the driver.
- Always buckle up while in the vehicle.
 - Please note that depending on the scene, other safety equipment may need to be worn. If you have questions regarding additional safety equipment, please speak with the stunt coordinator and director.
- Maintain driving speeds that have been deemed safe for the scene.
 - If you have questions regarding vehicle speed for a shot, please speak with the stunt coordinator.





ENTERTAINMENT: DRIVING SAFETY

- Make sure to maintain communication with all required crew and actors during the scene.
 - Communication can include things like hand signals, the use of radios, or other means of communication.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, whether you are driving a vehicle for your normal daily tasks or if you are driving a vehicle for a scene, you want to make sure that you are driving the vehicle in a safe manner. Driving a vehicle while you are under the influence, tired, or otherwise distracted could expose you and others either on the road or set to harm. To help minimize the chances of an accident occurring, you should make sure that you are well-rested and driving the vehicle in accordance with the law, and if you will be driving a vehicle for a scene, make sure that you are well prepared for what the scene will be asking of you. If you have any questions regarding the safe driving of vehicles for your production, please speak with your supervisor.

