

How To Properly Sit In Your Vehicle

There are many aspects to safe vehicle operation which is often overlooked. The proper seating position in a vehicle is one of these important areas frequently overlooked by employees and employers alike. The proper seating in a vehicle is important both to ensure the safe operation of the vehicle, but also to prevent stress pains caused by sitting in an uncomfortable position for long periods of time.

This safety meeting has been borrowed almost word for word from the safe driving handbook published by Aerospace Education Foundation. This book is based upon the US Air Force multi-media program called, "How To Survive in the Traffic Jungle". This 126 page book for US Air Force Pilots tells us "Driving is more complicated than piloting"! Let us pay attention to this important training which will help us to survive the traffic just like a US Air Force Pilot.

Sit down behind the wheel so that your shoulders rest easily against the seat. Your back should be against the seat, not humped forward. Move the seat back until your arms have to be straight in front of you to grasp the top of the steering wheel. *(In vehicles with modern adjustable steering wheels which can be adjusted straight up and down, the proper seating position is for your wrists to touch the top of the steering wheel when you have your arms straight out in front of you.)* That's your proper distance. Of course, you don't drive with your hands in this top position. But move your seat so that you can do this comfortably. Your best driving position, then, is to bring your hands down to the 10-to-2 o'clock position, or to the quarter-to-3 position. Don't grasp the wheel too tightly. Hold it easily, not tightly. Use both hands, of course. A light grip gives you a better idea of how the car responds to the road surface, tells you how your traction is, helps you feel but not be jarred too much by the bumps or jiggles in the road.

In this position you should have your arms somewhat relaxed and slightly bent. Your shoulders and back will be supported.

For some people in some cars it may turn out you then can't reach the pedals when sitting this far back. You can have blocks put on your foot pedals to give you good control of the car. It would be better to go to some effort getting the blocks installed than to hunch the seat forward to where you have good control with your feet, but do not have an easy relaxed position for steering control.

Short people sometimes get a car in which they have to pull on the steering wheel and raise themselves when they really wish to see something. This isn't good at all. Such people need a different car or a seat cushion. The cushion is cheap, and even a different car may be cheaper than a hospital bill or a lawsuit.

Comfort and flexibility are so important to good driving that racing drivers have their car seats built to their own specifications. They take their car seat with them from one racing car to the next.

Sitting too far back brings discomfort in the form of stiff-arm steering and tired arm muscles. Sitting too close makes it difficult to turn the wheel. It may even be impossible to turn it fast enough for an emergency.

Fatigue from any cause leads to restlessness and irritability, and slows your reflexes and control.

To some degree everyone drives by the seat of their pants.

Sit correctly.

Before starting out, remember these three basic steps for safety:

- Adjust your seat for control.
- Adjust your mirrors for vision.
- Fasten your seat-belt for insurance