

NCLM Driver Safety School - 2015

Decision Stations – General Information for “On-Course” Instructors

Decision Station Goals Focus on the Following:

1. Importance of scanning, looking, & thinking ahead to avoid surprises, as well as experiencing what happens in the car when this does not occur.
2. Decision-making while under some level of stress. Decision-making is the #1 cause of police collisions.
3. Wide-angle lens view of the road/situation. Getting tunnel vision or fixating on anything, particularly a distraction or collision threat has a variety of negative consequences (e.g., surprise, engagement of startle reflex, inability to seek an escape route, over/under application of steering, brake, and/or throttle inputs). In-car instructors watch to see if the driver's fixate too long on anything or if they are late identifying on-course decisions. Once aware of this skill, officers can start coaching themselves on the road and be their own co-pilot.

There will be four decision stations this year: intersection, lane change, gate before slalom, and gate after the slalom. Please find below a brief summary on how to operate each of the decision stations.

Lane Change & Gates (2) - Officers have to choose which direction to enter these features (right or left). One station will use the traffic light to direct officers through the correct gate/lane. The other station will use signs and/or cone walls to indicate the correct way through the feature. Sign options may include large arrow, Keep Right, One Way, etc.). Officers must look ahead entering or exiting the feature to determine which route is open. Feel free to rotate the signs to vary the look and make the officers think harder in processing what to do). Periodically change the lane that is blocked so drivers have to adjust during each session.

In Session #2 the course is run in reverse so you will need to adjust the signage so it can be seen by drivers coming the opposite way. Session #3 will be run the same direction as Session #2. In Session #3 one worker will move to another location on course to place and randomly move their assigned distraction items (e.g., deer, bozo, dog, etc.). The worker staying at the station will also be assigned a distraction device.

More on use of “The Light” at one the Gates – The remote controlled LED traffic light tells officers to go right or left through the gate. This is part of the features described above. This feature has received fantastic reviews over the past few years as a great teaching/practice tool for looking ahead. It helps officers to either look out the side window or all the way through the prior feature so as to 1) help them anticipate what

to do next, 2) avoid being surprised, and 3) makes navigating the feature really difficult when sending them to the more acute angle **if** they are not looking ahead and realize they need to slow down. You'll randomly change the light and thus the entrance to the feature. Please avoid last second “gotchas” or changes as training for those situations is minimally effective. Session #2 the course is run in reverse so you will need to turn the light around so it can be seen by drivers coming the opposite way. Session #3 will be run the same direction as Session #2, so no change will take place other than also deploying a distraction device.

Intersection – The intersection will use stop/go signs inserted in cones at the intersection. Randomly change the signs. More information can be found on the intersection decision station at the end of the Instructor Guide. During Session #3 a distraction device will also be assigned for deployment.

Session #3 - Emergency Response Drill (Quick Summary)

Radio calls will be dispatched to officers. The goal is to respond under control employing the key principles discussed during the course and make proper decisions in the “heat of the moment.” The drill also emphasizes the importance of knowing ones' limits and slowing down when multi-tasking and under stress. Officers will not be told in advance what the calls will be. Cars will be sent in pairs. Each officer will take a turn being the lead and back-up car.

The distraction devices assigned to your station 1) create a challenge to see if officers are indeed “looking ahead” and able to easily navigate this unexpected obstacle, and 2) create a visual distraction so officers can practice their scanning/vision-up tactics and avoid “fixating” or going into “zoom lens” when they perceive a threat.

Two consecutive laps are run in both of the scenarios below. This is intended to 1) increase stress and adrenaline, and 2) give more time for the decision-making scenario to evolve.

- **First Call:** Two consecutive laps. Officers respond on the radio to back-up an officer on a traffic stop on a routine/low priority call. Quickly, the call changes to Code 3 - officer has been shot and needs assistance ASAP.
- **Second Call:** Officers get a call about stolen vehicle. They spot vehicle and engage. Sometime during the second lap, dispatch notifies the officers it's not a stolen vehicle, rather an “unauthorized use” by a 15-year daughter who took her mother's car. Officers should terminate or disengage the pursuit at this point. **WARNING – be extra careful on course due to 3 car pursuit and 2 laps. Personal safety first, duty second!!!**