

Driver's Ed. Education
A Series of Specifics for Success
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Article #4 - Taking Care of Business

Remember when you first got started in Driver's Ed.? There sure was a lot to learn, eh?

Come to think of it, while in some respects it gets easier the more you know, it also gets that much harder to improve as the gains get more infinitesimal. Geez, this isn't really very easy at all!

Everyone reaches various defining moments in their "driving career." One such moment may materialize as the sudden realization that you don't seem to have enough time to get everything done before a corner. This particular moment may be accompanied and also defined by the sound of a nervous person in the right seat strenuously insisting that you "BRAKE!"

Such occurrences usually follow the period of intense trial and error in learning "the Line." You begin to realize that your past instructors have been ever so right; To go FAST, you must first learn "the Line" while going relatively SLOW, and then eventually the speed more or less takes care of itself. Unfortunately, this being an entirely fluid exercise, meaning things are constantly changing, you can rest assured they will be again... very soon.

At the point where you have learned "the Line" and can drive it with some consistency, you may notice that this has allowed you to go a lot faster. This has the coincident effect of bringing you to the corners much sooner. Suddenly, it seems the real race is in getting positioning, braking, and downshifting completed early enough before you have to turn. Here's a trick to help you sort through these frustrating and potentially ruinous moments.

As you begin going faster, you will need to re-evaluate your braking and turning points constantly. The first step might be to not "Brake Backwards." Distilled, this means braking hard early and then easing up as you reach the turn-in point. Now, that turn-in point will change depending on the circumstance, but there's a lot to do before we get there. Let's play a little game that I play with my students when they become "corner chargers" and look at that turn-in cone in a different light.

O.K. Let's temporarily rename that turn-in cone as the "**Business Cone.**" Passing, Braking, Shifting, Positioning... There's lots of "Business" to take care of before a turn. It stands to reason that one cannot turn in effectively if one is still busy trying to get positioned, shifted, and slowed. Most students probably have not perfected their Heel & Toe downshifts yet or are still using brake-then-blip/shift-then-brake-again or clutch-slip downshifts. They are likely also not overly crisp with their car placement or turn in points either. If the speed has happened before these areas have been tidied up, things can get a bit dodgy. There's Too Much Business going on!

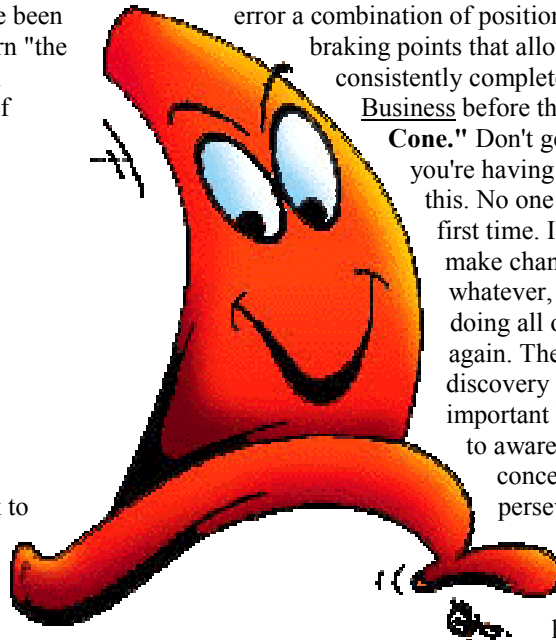
This is a common overload situation, both for the driver, the car and the instructor. It is more than likely that the student is charging into many of the turns with suspect control, and even if they can indeed complete the corners in question without going off, this will result in the inability to accelerate as soon as someone who has entered the turn more prudently. Since turns are followed by either straightaways or more turns, you have obviously fouled up the ensuing sequence, for which you will pay dearly in terms of flow, straightaway speed, and overall lap efficiency. What to do?

The goal of this lesson will be to learn by trial and error a combination of positioning, shifting, and braking points that allows you to consistently complete All of your Business before that "**Business Cone.**"

Don't get frustrated if you're having difficulty in doing this. No one does it right the first time. If it rains or you make changes to your car or whatever, you will be re-doing all of this again and again. The process of discovery is what is important here. It boils down to awareness, patience, concentration, and perseverance. Keep at it and it will come eventually, and you will then have a system that

you can use for any combination of circumstances.

By completing your business before you turn in you are helping your likely overloaded brain to do as few things as possible simultaneously. You will also allow your car's suspension to unwind and return to full readiness before it has to cope with cornering loads. Balance in both the driver and the car is the goal here, and it is critical. With more seat time, you



will eventually be able to condense this process down to a shorter track distance, but don't rush it. Remember, Slow In, Fast Out. It's not only safer, you'll really learn, and go, faster!

So, you've learned "the Line" and can repeat it with some degree of consistency. You are now attempting to systematically reverse the negative side effects of the extra speed this has given you by completing All of Your Business before you reach the **"Business Cone."** Remember how I said this driving thing was a fluid exercise? Well, now that you can do "the Line" and "Take Care of Business" consistently, we're gonna re-name that turn-in cone again!

Henceforth, it will be known as... the
"ACCELERATION CONE"

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by John L. Hajny

I have striven to make this an extremely well written and accurate series on a subject that is not to be taken lightly and can obviously be dangerous. To maintain the accuracy and proper presentation of that message, I would ask that absolutely no use whatsoever of any text herein be made without my express written consent.

I ask you to please abide by this request.

Thank you.