

Cockpit Drill

Purpose: An important series of safety checks which must be carried out every time you get behind the wheel and always before starting the engine and driving off.

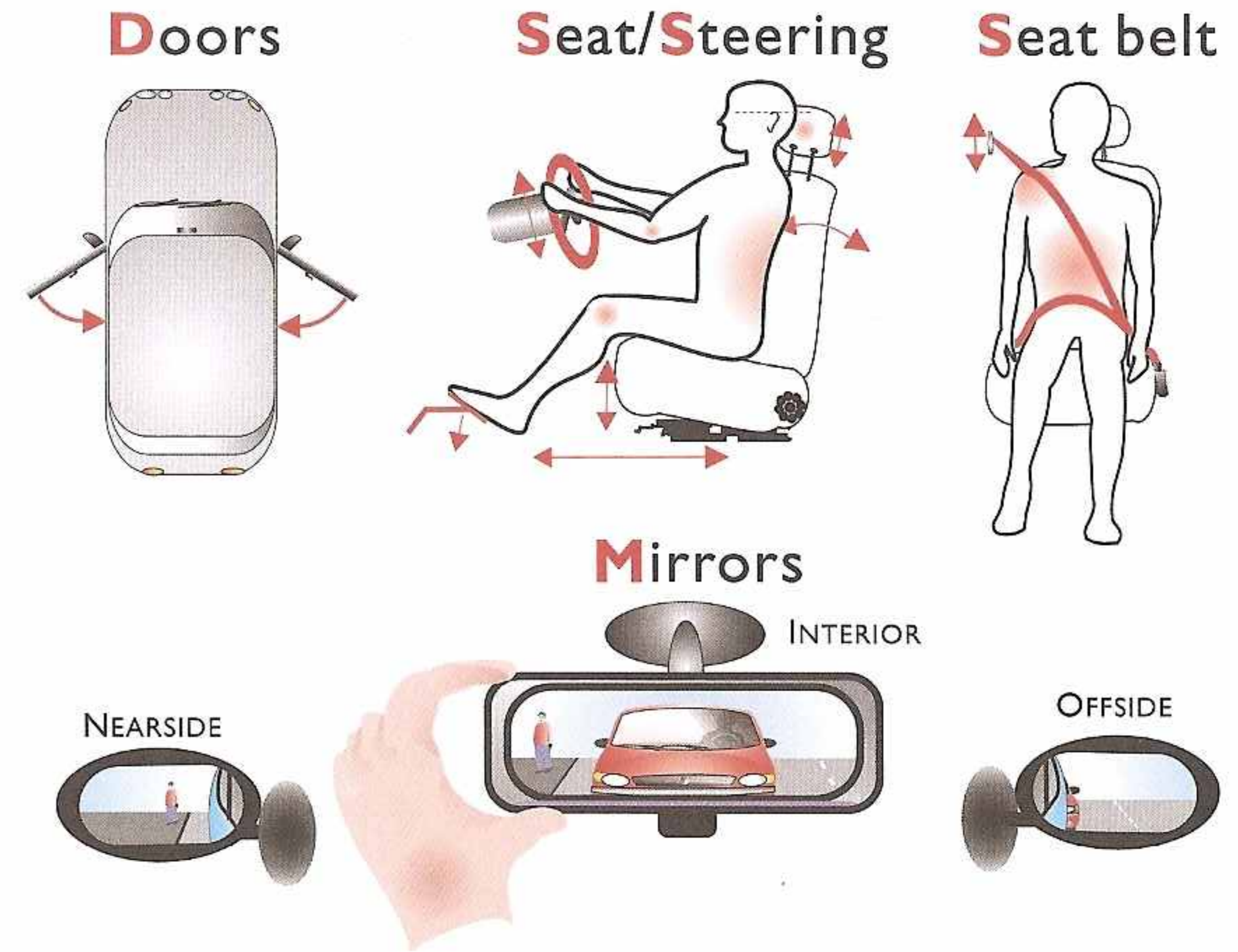
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Doors: You must check that all doors of the vehicle are properly shut. As the driver, this is your responsibility.

Seat: Your seat should be adjusted for comfort, control and safety. The base of the seat should be adjusted so that the clutch pedal can be depressed fully, with the left foot, and still have a reasonable bend at the knee. The back of the seat (the 'rake') should be adjusted so that the steering wheel can be held at the 'ten-to-two' or 'quarter-to-three' position with a reasonable bend at the elbow. Also check that the hands can slide freely around the whole of the steering wheel without discomfort or obstruction. The head-restraint should be adjusted so that the centre is in line with the top of the ears and is positioned as close to the back of the head as is comfortable.

Steering: In addition to adjusting the seat (as above) some vehicles have an adjustable steering column. If moving the column always ensure you lock its position afterwards.

Seat belt: Ensure your seat belt is adjusted properly for comfort and safety. The belt should lay flat across your chest and hips with no twists. Most vehicles have height adjusters at the shoulder point. This should be adjusted so that the belt lays centrally on the shoulder, not on the neck.



Mirrors: The driving mirrors should be adjusted from your normal driving position for the best view to the rear. The interior mirror should frame the rear window with a slight tilt to the offside. The side of the vehicle should be just visible in the exterior mirrors with the horizon across the centre of the mirror. Most interior mirrors have flat glass which gives a true image of the road behind. Most exterior mirrors have convex glass which is slightly curved to give a bigger view, but has the disadvantage of making things smaller and look further away than they are.

Tug & Wiggle: Before starting the engine always check the handbrake is on securely and the gear lever is in the neutral position.

Quick Quiz

1. Why do we use the clutch pedal to gauge our seat position for driving?
2. What is a quick way of observing that your doors are properly shut?
3. Why is it important to have a 'reasonable bend' in the left knee (when the clutch is down) and the elbows (When the hands are at the 10 to 2 position)?
4. What could be the consequences of wearing a twisted seat belt?
5. Why should we avoid touching the glass of our driving mirrors when adjusting them?