



For immediate release:

Ford Driving Skills for Life initiative provides free road safety training to over 400 Saudi students in four days

- The program pairs newly licensed drivers with professional instructors to focus on primary skills that can help avoid accidents
- Since 2013, DSFL has provided complimentary instruction to about 5,000 students in the Middle East
- Since 2015, Ford Philanthropy has granted nearly \$1.4 million through various causes across the Middle East

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, May 20 2024 – Ford Philanthropy, formerly known as the Ford Fund, brought back its Driving Skills for Life (DSFL) initiative to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia training 459 students at King Saud University in Riyadh.

Now in its 21st year globally, DSFL has provided free training to newly licensed drivers in over 40 countries, with about 5,000 students across the Middle East participating since 2013.

DSFL pairs new drivers with professional instructors to focus on five primary driving skills that can help avoid accidents: hazard recognition, vehicle handling, speed management and space management, as well as distracted and impaired driving.

“Our purpose is to contribute in building a better world and improving the lives of our people, the communities we call home, and the planet we all share. Unfortunately, road safety remains a critical challenge, here in the Middle East and worldwide,” said Rasha Ghanem, Communications Director, Ford Middle East.

“As new drivers, young people can be particularly vulnerable to accidents – with drivers aged 19-29 accounting for [38% of fatalities and 36% of injuries in 2023](#) in the UAE.

“Through initiatives such as DSFL, we aim to help reducing these numbers by improving the knowledge and confidence of young drivers – instilling the right habits and skills early for a healthy, safe lifetime of driving.”

Suhail Jefferies, a professional driving instructor who has been involved in motorsports for over three decades, said: “The instructors at DSFL bring years of experience of working at some of the world’s major racetracks. We’ve undertaken several safe driving and defensive driving courses throughout our careers, elements of which have been integrated into DSFL.”

The Driving Skills for Life (DSFL) modules cover everything from the basics – acceleration, braking, signaling for lane changes, emergency braking, and steering grip – to blind spot management and reverse parking. Crucially, students are also provided comprehensive instruction on safety do’s and don’ts.



“Our students really appreciated the engaging nature of DSFL, which blended instruction with hands-on activities aimed at building safety awareness,” said Khalid Alajmi, Director of Public Relations and Media, King Saud University. “I would like to thank Ford and the professional instructors for a memorable and important day of learning for our students. Driving is a life skill and having safer drivers on the roads benefits everyone.”

Weam Almuaiter, a third-year French major, said, “I appreciated the importance placed on warning students of the dangers of texting while driving and impaired driving. It was also interesting to learn about how far and fast an airbag is deployed – and how useful ABS can be as a safety technology.”

For first-year law student Nasser, Driving Skills for Life provided valuable context on the importance of everyone in a vehicle wearing a seat belt – not just those at the front. “The program also taught us the importance of observing safety rules and road regulations, as well as the risks of mobile phone use behind the wheel. Overall, I believe it has helped me be a more responsible driver.”

Since 2015, Ford Philanthropy has granted nearly \$1.4 million across the Middle East through disaster relief and Global Caring Month – where Ford employees are strongly encouraged to support communities in need, including the elderly, children with cancer, and people with special needs – and initiatives such as Driving Skills for Life and the Henry Ford Entrepreneurship Academy, which upskills young people with valuable tools and skills to help develop their business acumen.

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