



# Defensive Driving

Defensive driving can have a significant impact on workers' safety. A vehicle can be a deadly machine in the hands of a careless driver. Being a defensive driver is the key to safety on the road. Statistics show the seriousness of motor vehicle accidents:

- Motor vehicle accidents are the most common cause of death for workers.
- 1 in 4 fatal work injuries involves a vehicle accident.
- Someone is injured every 18 seconds while driving.
- More than 2 million disabling injuries result from vehicle accidents each year.
- A person dies in a car crash every 11 minutes.
- Seatbelts save more than 100,000 lives yearly.

Aggressive and distracted drivers are hazardous. Beware of the most common signs that can cause crashes:

- **Tailgaters:** drive extremely close and attempt to pass as quickly as possible.
- **Erratic drivers:** make frequent lane changes, moving in and out of lanes to proceed ahead.
- **Red-light runners:** attempt to advance through intersections as the light is turning or are not aware of a red light.
- **Road racers:** travel faster than the posted speed limit and cannot respond timely to changes in traffic.
- **Distracted drivers:** engage in disruptive activities - reading, eating, drinking or talking on the phone.
- **Impaired drivers:** swerve, change lanes and drive slow or speed lane changes.

If confronted with aggressive and distracted drivers, take the following precautions:

- Get out of the way – signal to indicate that you are changing lanes.
- Be aware of vehicles when approaching yellow lights, flashing lights and stop signs.
- Scan your rearview and side mirrors.
- Avoid vehicles that cannot stay in their lane.
- Put your pride aside – do not challenge others by speeding up, slowing down or attempting to hold them back.
- Avoid eye contact, which can sometimes enrage an aggressive driver.
- Take the high road – ignore gestures and refuse to return them.
- Report aggressive or impaired driving – pull over and make the call to report emergencies or have a passenger make the call, if available.

Tips to arrive safely:

- **Plan ahead:** allow yourself extra time to reach your destination.
- **Concentrate on the road:** do not allow yourself to become distracted by phone calls, text messages, eating, putting on makeup, etc.
- **Relax:** play your favorite relaxing music to calm your nerves and help you to enjoy your time in the car.
- **Drive the posted speed limit:** fewer crashes occur when vehicles are traveling at or about the same speed.
- **Identify alternate routes:** even if it looks longer, you may find it is less congested.
- **Use public transportation if possible:** it can give you some much-needed relief from life behind the wheel.

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