

Day 6 Make Up Assignment

Mental and Physical States & Reduced Risk Driving

Objective: The student will recognize the driver, and his or her physical and mental state, is the single most important element when it comes to the safe and risk reduced use of our public roadways.

The driver is the sole operator of a vehicle as soon as he or she sits down behind the wheel. You, when you decide to drive, are solely responsible for your actions, the actions of your vehicle, and the manner in which you operate the vehicle. You cannot control what other drivers will do, only the decisions and actions you decide upon are within your direct attention. There are many factors that affect you and your ability to operate a motor vehicle:

Vision

Fatigue

Medication

Physical problems

Alcohol & Drugs

Alertness

Skill level

We will address most of these in this hour. Alcohol and drug use will be discussed in more detail in another part of the course.

Age & Experience

Age on either end of the spectrum presents challenges when operating a motor vehicle. Older drivers have slower reflexes, reduces vision and hearing, and tend to drive more slowly. They also rely more on their knowledge and experience as drivers and therefore avoid critical, high risk situations and are involved in fewer accidents. While it would appear that young drivers have an advantage, they statistically more likely to be in an accident than older more experienced drivers. Young drivers have better vision and quicker reflexes but they must learn to control their impulsive behavior and learn not to overreact to situations. They must give themselves time to gain experience and knowledge and develop their driving skills over time. It takes time to learn how to make good judgments and avoid collisions. Drivers in the age group from 15-24 have the highest death rates when involved in motor vehicle crashes. That is why the state of Texas requires such comprehensive driver training for teens and young adults.

Watch the following video. You can also pull it up on YouTube.

HIGH RISK YEARS 20 minutes

Physical Health & Fitness

While you do not have to be an Olympic bodybuilder with huge muscles to operate a car, it is important that you be in the best physical health as possible whenever you get behind the wheel. Driving requires you to pay attention, make good decisions, and take proper action as needed throughout the entire time you are driving a car. You are required to coordinate your eyes, hands, and feet in a manner so that they all work together to keep you and other roadway users safe. Different people have different ability levels when driving a car. It takes a certain level of coordination and you must adapt your driving to your skill and ability. It is equally important that you are at your best when you get into the car and when you are not, you should refrain from driving. It is important to know your own personal limits on any given day and at any given time.

Alcohol, Drugs & Medications

Driving requires you to make good decisions using your brain and vision. It is much more than just placing your hands on the wheel and steering the car in the correct direction. Anytime your



brain's thinking, reacting, and problem-solving abilities are impacted, your driving ability will be affected. When you decide to drink alcohol and then get behind the wheel of a car, your ability to make good decisions is impacted. Deaths from crashes involving drinking and driving for adults and especially teens has been on the rise. This age group, 16-20, represents a small percentage of licensed drivers and yet they are statistically much higher to be involved in a crash where alcohol is a contributing factor.

Similarly, any medication either prescribed by a doctor or over the counter can have side effects that limit or impair your ability to operate a car. Be sure you read all labels carefully and know and understand how you react to medicines before you decide to get behind the wheel and drive.

Other Illnesses & Disabilities

Some people suffer from what are called chronic illnesses, which are illnesses that people have over a long period of time, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. These often require long term use of medicines. Having a driver license in these circumstances may require

medical approval in order to carry a license to drive a vehicle. You may be required to provide a doctor's approval assuring that any medications you take do not interfere with the driving task.

Some people may also suffer from physical or mental disabilities that may or may not affect their ability to drive a car. Cars can be fitted with devices that allow driving by those who are physically limited, such as joysticks, steering knobs, hand controls, modified pedals, voice activated controls, etc. Drivers with disabilities must learn to adapt their driving habits and procedures and usually required to undergo a full medical and driving assessment to show that they are able and fit to drive a vehicle safely.

Hearing loss is one type of disability that can sometimes be limiting but can often be handled through the use of hearing aids. If not, drivers can still compensate by relying more on their visual inputs and using their mirrors to search the roadway even more frequently than those without hearing loss.

Watch the following video. You may also be able to find it on YouTube.

[Today Show Drowsy Driving](#)

So far you have mostly been a passenger in the vehicle. As a young child you most likely had a permanent spot in the backseat without a care in the world. You could look out the window, watch a movie, play on your gaming device or cell phone, read, sleep, whatever you wanted and you just trusted that whomever was driving would get you to your destination safely and successfully.



As you got a bit older you may been allowed to move up to the front passenger seat where you may or may not have had a little more awareness of what goes on when someone is driving. Many students come into the driving school with no or little desire to drive or little or no idea of what it actually takes to drive a car. They have been passengers for so long and they kind of like it that way and prefer to get on their phones or sleep and let someone else do the driving. Since you are taking this course, someone, most likely your parental unit, have gotten tired of chauffeuring you around and they have decided it is time that you learn to drive yourself around. Gone are your days of leisurely sitting in the passenger seat without a care in the world. Now

you are faced with the task of driving and can no longer doze off and let someone else take you where you need to go.

Driving is very much a mental activity that requires you to be alert, pay attention, see and think. Many factors interfere with your ability to maintain such alertness and attention and can lead to poor decisions. Fatigue is one of the main contributors to drivers making late and improper decisions when they drive. Being tired makes it harder for you to perceive, process, interpret, judge, and react to a hazard. Teens tend to be sleep deprived because of outside activities,

studying, working, or socializing. These all contribute to being a drowsy driver even in the day to day driving from work or school. Drowsiness is a condition that will affect every driver at some time or another. Drowsiness makes you miss important information on the roadway such as signs, lights, and sounds. You also may not see things as clearly as you would if you were fully alert and it will also take you longer to process the information you do see. Distances and speed may be misjudged, making decisions in high-risk situations may be hindered, and your overall driving ability may be impaired. When you drive drowsy, your risk of a collision increases greatly. In fact, driving while drowsy is now a leading cause of traffic crashes. Unfortunately, it is not rare. Most people will admit that they have driven drowsy and many even admit to actually falling asleep at the wheel, some for what we call micro-sleeps (falling asleep for just a few seconds) or some for even longer. Either way, the risk of a collision is sharply greater when you are driving and tired.



Causes of Fatigue

Here is a list of factors that can cause fatigue. You should try to avoid or minimize these as much as possible when you know you are going to be behind the wheel. You may not always be able to avoid them but by being aware of them you should be able to limit them to some extent.

- Lack of sleep
- Boredom or monotony, especially a problem on long trips
- Stress, can place undue mental strain on a driver
- Alcohol or drugs
- Illness
- Overeating, especially unhealthy, fatty foods
- Sun glare
- Prolonged, uninterrupted highway driving, also known as highway hypnosis
- Fixating on a single noise, such as the engine noise, tire hum, AC blower



- Driving when you should be sleeping, late at night. Your body's normal sleep pattern is between midnight and 6am. When you try to drive during these hours, your body is going to try to get you to go to sleep as this is what it is used to. Be especially careful when you must drive between these hours.

- A long day at work or school, after a hard, physically exerting/exhausting day
- Certain times of the day, i.e., 2-5pm in the afternoon, early morning hours before dawn
- A very warm, overheated vehicle with a lack of fresh air

What Happens & Warning Signs

Not everyone is affected the same way or to the same degree by fatigue. You must learn your own warning signs and be sure to not ignore them when they do occur. Here are a list of physical, mental, and emotional warning signs that may happen when fatigue is an issue.

- Blurred vision
- Taking unusual risks
- Inaccurate judgement of speed
- Irritability
- Double vision
- Loss of depth perception
- Drowsiness
- Difficulty focusing, heavy eyelids, frequent blinking
- Yawning
- Lowered vision
- Loss of control
- Poor reaction time

Your body demands sleep and it does not care if you are driving. When your body craves sleep it will eventually win and you will fall asleep. **DO NOT IGNORE** the signs and signals your body is screaming at you when it is tired.

- Your eyes are heavy and you have trouble keeping them open.
- You have a hard time keeping a constant speed.
- Your head bobs...you know you have felt it before, in class, as a passenger, while watching a boring movie...
- You keep hearing the rumble strips or reflectors on the edge of the road indicating you are having trouble staying in your lane or on the roadway
- You cannot remember how you got to where you are or how long you have been driving.

Drivers who are sleep deprived. When you lose sleep, the only way to pay back the “sleep debt” is to sleep. When you lose as little as one or two hours of sleep a night, you will eventually have to catch up by sleeping extra hours. People who skip sleep regularly have a much higher risk of being in an accident. The more sleep you miss, the higher the risk becomes.

Driving long distances. People who travel frequently often drive long distances without breaks trying to reach their destination more quickly. They will also often drive overnight to save time. Boredom and drowsiness are a major problem and increase the risk for these drivers.

Untreated Sleep Disorders. People with medical disorder like sleep apnea or narcolepsy are at potentially higher risk of falling asleep when driving. Similarly, snoring can also interfere with

regular sleep and may contribute to fatigue when driving. These health issues must be addressed by a doctor as soon as they become noticeable.

Young drivers. Young people tend to sleep too little, stay up too late, and drive at night. The time of day right after school from 2-5pm has been shown to be the most dangerous time for young drivers to be behind the wheel.

People who work on late night shifts at work. Many jobs require workers around the clock. Some people are required or choose to work the late night or early morning shifts. Driving home after these shifts is the most dangerous time for these drivers.

Truck or commercial drivers. People who drive for a living face the most danger when driving. They are on the roadway more than normal people, drive many more miles which are often during night time hours, and are often forced to deal with stress of delivery deadlines. Sleep related crashes are a reality for these drivers every time they get behind the wheel.

How to stay awake?

TIPS & GUIDELINES

Falling asleep behind the wheel is a very real and dangerous threat. We, as drivers, must do everything we can to try to prevent and limit driving while fatigued. There are actions we can take to avoid feeling tired when driving.

Plan ahead when you are going to be in the car the next day. Get a good night of sleep, do not use drugs or alcohol the night before or the day of your planned trip, and avoid taking over the counter or prescription medication that may make you drowsy or have lingering effects. Try to eat healthy and avoid fatty, heavy foods.

More importantly, there are things you can do while you are driving that can help you stay fresh and alert.

- Take breaks at least every 2 hours or 100 miles.
- Stop to rest, stretch, walk, jog, get some fresh air.
- Listen to music, talk to other people in the car, chew gum, sing, eat snack foods.
- Drink liquids with caffeine, but note that once the caffeine wears off, fatigue may be even worse.
- Take turns driving, let other passengers drive if possible.
- Try not to drive when you are sick.
- Keep the air conditioner on or roll down the windows to keep the air fresh.
- Stop, take a short nap whenever you are feeling tired.
- Keep extra following distance if you are feeling fatigued.
- Wear sunglasses to limit the glare from the sun or roadway.
- Avoid driving late at night when your body is craving sleep.



- Shift in your seat, sit up straight, check mirrors more frequently, try to stay focused on the cars and signs around you.
- Don't try to ignore the signs. When you are drowsy, you must stop and take a break. You will not win the battle...your body will shut down if it gets too tired.
- Admit when you are tired and stop driving for a while. It's not worth the risk.



When stopping to rest, find somewhere safe to pull over, preferably not on the side of the road. Hotels are always a good option, however, there are usually rest areas every few hundred miles. You can also wait until you get to populated towns with well-lit parking lots and maybe even

security. If you stop at night, choose a well-lit, highly visible area. Lock your doors, leave the window open a bit, turn off the engine, and leave your parking lights on. These will not drain your battery while you are stopped. Once you wake up, walk around your car a bit to become fully alert and ready to drive again.

Emotions



Anger, fear, joy, anxiety, hate, grief, depression. We are human beings who have and experience a wide range of emotions on any given day and at any given moment. Emotions can be positive or negative but they all can affect the way in which we interact with others on and off the roadway. They can affect the way we think, reason, and react to situations. Some may have a negative effect on the way we drive.

Effects of Emotions

Physical effects of emotions may include a rapid heartbeat, faster breathing, tight muscles, sweaty palms, and a feeling of stress or exhaustion. Anger and fear can lead to a fight or flight response in your body. It is how we are wired...when you feel threatened your body goes into survival mode and your pulse, heart rate, and blood pressure may increase getting your body ready for a rapid response to a perceived threat. This is an appropriate response when in a life-threatening situation however not appropriate when you are driving a car. This type of reaction can lead to irritability, anxiousness, excitability and may interfere with our ability to interact with other people, especially other driver on the roadway. When emotionally upset or excited, our reaction to common traffic situations may change and ineffective or inappropriate or exaggerated. Strong emotions tend to interfere with the way we think, process, reason, and decide. A upset or excited driver will view a traffic light or sign, a curve in the road, or passing another car differently than one who is calm and collected. You might drive through a yellow or red light or pass a slower driver when otherwise you would not. Consider the following methods for handling an emotional situation:

- Know yourself and your ability to handle stress and emotional situations.
- If you are upset, try to give yourself some time to calm down and maybe wait a while before getting behind the wheel.
- Let someone else drive if possible.
- Focus your attention and emotion on your actions and on the actions of the other driver and not on other a driver as an individual.
- Avoid heavy traffic, take a less stressful route, or stop driving if your emotions are taking over.

Emotional driving can cause us to be distracted and reduce our concentration on the driving task. Positive emotions are definitely a distraction but negative ones such as anger and hate can affect safe driving even more. This type of negative, anger driven emotion while driving is often termed road rage. We will address this in depth later in this session.

Vision

We spent a lot of time talking about vision in Session 5 but it is important to mention a few other things regarding vision and the act of driving a car. Vision is how you receive most of the information that helps you make good decisions when driving. Your eyes gather information and sends the information to your brain which then processes it and helps you to make good judgements on the roadway. It is important as you become a better and more skilled driver, that you enhance and improve on your ability to quickly scan and assess what you see. Problems such as color blindness, tunnel vision, and problems with depth perception can all hinder your ability to see and collect information visually while driving. People who are color blind must rely more on the shape and position of signs and signals when driving. The ability to judge how far away and how fast an object is moving in relation to you is very important when driving and those who have difficulty with their vision must adapt and scan the roadway much more often than normal.

The state of Texas requires an eye exam at the time you receive your driver license. It will test your ability to see far away and up close and will determine if you will be required to wear glasses when you drive. The clearness of what and how you see is called visual acuity. A responsible driver will be sure they can see well and will try to have a vision exam every two years or sooner if any problems such as blurriness, trouble focusing occur.

As we learned in an earlier session, your field of vision includes your central or conic vision and helps you identify color and details. Your peripheral, or fringe, vision is the wider part to the sides of your vision and detects movement and shapes but not details. Together these two areas work together to send signals to your brain and help you to judge space, distance, and speed. The entire area is called your field of vision.



Your eyes are constantly collecting information and sending it to your brain but if your brain tried to deal with all of the information it was getting at once it would go into overload. Selective vision is a skill a new driver must learn and develop. This allows your brain to process and deal with only those images it deems as important and necessary to the situation at hand. For example, a pedestrian walking down the side of a street or a cyclist riding in your lane may be noticed by your eyes and brain they may not be information immediately necessary. Once the pedestrian or cyclist reaches the crosswalk or intersection and begins to enter into the road, now they become information that must be dealt with right away to avoid a potential hazard. Dealing with and noticing when information is pertinent is a skill that comes with practice.

Watch the video. You may find it on YouTube as well.

Selective Awareness

Driving is a multi-sensory task. While you will use your vision the most when driving, there will be times when your other senses will come into play to help you detect problems or control your vehicle.

Hearing



Vehicles make noise. They have horns, sirens, tires squeal, engines hum, trains have whistles. These can warn you of danger, hazards or problems with your own vehicle. Hearing these sounds is important to a successful experience in the vehicle. Playing your music too loud or wearing ear buds or headphones while driving may interfere with your ability to hear sounds outside your vehicle. For people with hearing loss, driving requires that they make use of their sense of sight even more.

Smell

When a car is having problems, they will often smell differently which can alert you to the trouble. The smell of smoke, exhaust odors, and other fumes are warning signs of a problem with or in your vehicle.



Kinesthetic

Vehicles are heavy, balanced high-tech machines. When a change in the movement or balance of your vehicle occurs, this sense allows you to react correctly by either accelerating or braking to fix problem.

Road Rage

Objective: The Student will recognize, avoid, and react appropriately to aggressive driving.

Extreme Emotions: Aggressive Driving Behavior & Road Rage

There are all kinds of drivers on the roadway; old, young, experienced, novice, fast, slow, patient, aggressive, and more. The kind of driver you are depends to some extent on your personality and the kind of day you are having. The pressures and stresses of daily life such as school, work, family, along with the ever-increasing number of cars on the roadways may lead to a driver becoming irritated and easily angered when behind the wheel.

You can only control your own behavior and you must learn to control and manage your feelings when driving. You cannot control what other drivers do. Some drivers may become pushy, speed, follow too closely, decide to ignore traffic controls, and make improper or unsafe turns or maneuvers. It is important for you to recognize aggressive drivers/driving and the errors commonly made when driving aggressively.

You can learn how to deal with other drivers who lose their control and engage you in aggressive



interactions. Road rage is extreme aggression and can be extremely dangerous, violent, and even deadly. Many drivers carry guns, knives, baseball bats, etc in their cars and even a vehicle can quickly become a lethal weapon. Road rage does not limit itself. Rich or poor, male or female, old or young...all can become aggressive drivers at any given moment and may pose a direct threat to you and your vehicle. A highly stressed, extremely angry driver can quickly become a violent and dangerous person resulting in possible assault and even murder.

[Video: Road Rage: Drivers Behaving Badly](#)

What causes people to become aggressive and angry?

The Formula for Road Rage:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{More driver interactions (more cars, less space), greater diversity of drivers} \\ & + \\ & \text{Cultural norms of disrespect condoning hostility} \\ & = \\ & \text{Aggressive driving and road rage battles} \end{aligned}$$

Our highways are becoming more and more congested as more and more cars are produced and purchased. Everyone takes their own car to work or school which means there are more and more cars on the road at any given time. Rush hour traffic is a real problem and can occur at any time of the day, not just 5 o'clock. Sitting in traffic for extended periods of time, especially when one is in a hurry can create stress and anger levels to rise. People seem to always be rushing to get somewhere and many fail to leave themselves enough time. We get into our car thinking it's okay, and that we will be able to make up for leaving late by driving quickly and all the while our driving becomes more aggressive as we try even harder not to be late.



Stress has been determined to be a major problem facing today's society and can come from many factors. Job or academic stress, pressure to succeed, pressure to fulfill personal obligations to family and friends, and general feeling of disrespect for others have all contributed to increased hostility on our roadways.



We are also spending more and more time in our cars and they are often our most expensive, prized possession, a direct reflection of our self-image. When we see other drivers seemingly insult us through a gesture or unkind word, we often react as if we were personally insulted and the tendency is to act the same or engage in further inappropriate behavior. These types of interactions can escalate quickly and result in unreasonable actions and violence. Strong emotions interfere with your ability to think and make wise decisions. Just as we often say things we do not mean in anger, the same is true when driving. We make decisions and make moves that we would not normally make.

With the large number of cars and drivers on the roadways, partnered with the effects of stress and irrational decision making, road rage has become a major concern for law enforcement. Lawmakers in many states have passed laws to increase the severity of penalties for drivers found guilty of road rage incidents. The best action you can take is to de-escalate and avoid these interactions all together if at all possible. In the next section you will learn to identify the different types of road rage and how to deal with them effectively.

Safe, defensive driving starts with you. You cannot control the environment outside of your car and you cannot control the behavior of other drivers on the roadway. You can however control yourself and your actions. It is up to you to protect yourself from possible road rage incidents by controlling your own emotions and learning to become a good, courteous driver who avoids doing things that may further infuriate other already stressed out and angry roadway users. As you read over the types of road rage think about yourself and people you know. Do you or someone you know display any of these signs? Are you or anyone you know on a path of further trouble based on these descriptions of the different levels of road rage???



Quiet Road Rage

Do you or someone you know do any of the following?

Always rushing to get to where you are going?

Constantly complaining about the behavior of other drivers?

Treat driving as a competition?

Always trying to beat the other guy?

Speeding up instead of letting another car get in front of you?

Seeing a car with a blinker and speeding up instead of slowing down to let them in?

Do you tailgate a slow driver or back off and go around when it is safe to do?



Verbal Road Rage

Do you or someone you know do any of the following?

Yell, curse, wave angry gestures at other drivers?

Lay on the horn for a long, angry blast to display your disapproval of the other driver and his/her actions?

Do you speed up and pull alongside another car and glare at another motorist that made you angry?

Has your anger escalated to the point of a personal confrontation?



Have you ever gotten out of your car and verbally approached and confronted the driver that angered you?

Epic Road Rage



Do you or someone you know do any of the following?

Have you ever cut someone off on purpose, deliberately endangering yourself and others?

Block another roadway users' path of travel to get even or scare them?

Drive in front of someone and then slam on your brakes?

Chase another vehicle for several miles to scare them?

Used your vehicle to ram another car or another weapon to damage someone else's personal property?

Watch this video.

[Road Rage Incident Australia](#)

Driving Errors to Avoid

When you drive unsafely or do not follow the rules of the road, your actions or habits may engage, irritate, or infuriate other roadway users. Remember you cannot control what others do but you can control yourself and the way you drive. Studies have shown that certain driving habits and behaviors tend to lead to road rage interactions. Paying attention and avoiding these can lessen your chances of being involved in an incident of road rage.

Lane Blocking:

Never stop or block another driver in a lane. If you need to stop and ask directions or talk to someone, pull off the roadway to do so, so that other drivers can proceed on their way without being inconvenienced. Similarly, try to drive in the left lane of the highway only to pass. If you are in the left lane and another car approaches from behind, move over and let them pass. If the driver is speeding it is better to get out of their way and let them pass. It is safer to let them continue on their way and not your problem when they get pulled over and receive a ticket. If you are towing a trailer or otherwise driving slower than the flow of traffic, be considerate if traffic is building up behind you. Pull to the shoulder if there is one and let the other cars pass you so that they can be on their way.

Invading Space:

When someone cuts you off or gets too close to your vehicle you feel threatened. So do other drivers. Don't get in someone else's space. This includes tailgating, getting too close to another car when getting ready to pass, cutting back to the right too closely when returning to your lane after passing, and any other maneuver that involves another vehicle. When entering the freeway, leave plenty of space between your car and the cars already on the highway. When merging, be sure you have a big enough gap by adjusting your speed and changing lanes if necessary, so that drivers who are already on the highway do not have to change their speed to accommodate you. Do not lane hop or weave back and forth changing multiple lanes at one time. The few seconds you might gain by changing lanes erratically are not worth the danger it puts you and others in.

Change lanes only when absolutely necessary and always follow appropriate procedures when doing so.

Communication:

As a driver, it is your responsibility to let other roadway users know what you intend to do. Failure to communicate or improper or inappropriate communication, causes others to become agitated and may result in a road rage situation. **Always signal your intentions by using your blinker early and clearly**, without confusing other roadway users. It is required by law that you signal within 100 feet of your intended maneuver. Turning off your signal is equally important so that you do not confuse other drivers. Always make sure it clicks off if your turn or maneuver does not do so automatically. Check it when you make a turn, change a lane, or passing.

Another problem is driving with your high beams on. This can create a blinding glare for oncoming motorists and you are required by law to dim your headlights within 500 feet of an oncoming car. When faced with high beams yourself, resist the urge to get even by turning on yours if the other driver does not respond to a quick flash of your high beams as a gentle reminder that theirs are on. Just look far down the road and focus on the right side of the roadway or, if they are behind you, adjust your rearview mirror to deflect the bright light until they pass you. Using your high beams to get others to move over is also not a good idea. Repeatedly flashing your headlights at someone is not only rude but highly aggravating to other drivers. It is not that important that you force them to move over. Simply wait and change lanes when you have a chance.



Honking your horn is another behavior that tends to irritate other drivers. This communication tool must be used in moderation. A couple of quick taps on the horn should only be used when absolutely necessary. Avoid long, blaring honking and never use the horn to get someone's attention. The horn should only be used as safety device. Honking at someone as soon as a traffic signal changes is a main reason for agitation and has caused many incidents of road rage. Avoid this aggressive habit at all costs. Be patient, wait a few seconds. When you are at a red light, stay alert, stay off your phone and be ready to go when the light turns. That way you also avoid behavior that may result in someone getting mad at you.



Using inappropriate and offensive gestures, such as waving your fist, shaking your head in disapproval or worse, is a sure-fire way to make someone angry. Motorists have been stabbed, beaten, and even killed for this type of communication while driving. Remember, you cannot control what others do or do not do. Do not engage or aggravate others with your own behavior. Stay calm.

Other areas that may become a problem:

Parking lots, especially crowded ones, are always a source of aggravation and concern.

When you park, be sure you are using only one space. Do not park over or even on the line. Fix your car until you are completely in your space. Be careful when exiting and entering your car and take care that your door does not touch the other cars parked near you. Do not park in



handicap parking unless you have permission and can display the appropriate placard. Be respectful of others and their property and rights just as you would hope others would be of you and your car. NEVER fight for a parking space. Do not cut someone off who is clearly waiting for a space. Let the other driver have it. It is not worth it. Do not risk getting involved in a road rage incident over a parking space!

Cell phones are another source of trouble. Distracted drivers are a serious source of aggravation for other drivers. Stay off your phone while driving. When you are on your phone while driving you are seen as careless, and may cause another driver to react to you violently. Also, when on your phone your driving may be slower, erratic, and your decision making may be hindered. Use the hands-free option when driving to reduce the possibility of distraction. If you must talk or text, pull over and use your phone in a safe place before returning to the roadway. REMEMBER: drivers under the age of 18 are prohibited by law from using wireless or electronic devices while driving.



Nobody is perfect. Give other roadway users the benefit of the doubt. Correct your own bad habits and follow the rules of the road. Be courteous, and do not antagonize other drivers. Know your own limitations and apologize when you do make a mistake. We all make errors in daily life and driving is no different. Try to put yourself in someone else's place. Have you made that same error before? Give others the benefit of the doubt. Usually, people do not do things to deliberately make you mad. Keeping these in mind can help you avoid a confrontation while driving. Remember, you do not control what other drivers will do or how they will react. It is better to let it go than get involved in a dangerous situation involving your car and another driver on the roadway. All of us have been in a situation where another driver does something that makes us angry. Anger is a strong emotion and can be easily triggered when we are already

stressed out or upset. Every time you get in the car, you must evaluate your own mental state and decide if it is wise for you to be driving. The following are things to consider before getting behind the wheel of a car.

One: Postpone

Are you already worked up or angry? Did you have a stressful day at work or school? Are you already feeling angry or agitated?

Two: Recognize the warning signs

Do you know when you are starting to lose control? Is your anger reaching the boiling point? Are you having irrational thoughts?

Three: Keep your cool

Keep in mind the relative unimportance of being involved in a traffic or driving dispute. It is not worth your life to escalate to a point of such anger that you would risk your life to be right or to “win”. Your vehicle can quickly become a weapon and you must not allow yourself to get there. Be courteous. Follow the golden rule. Courtesy is contagious. When you let someone go ahead or smile or give the right of way to another driver, things get better. It takes the competition out of driving.

Four: Plan your time

Allow yourself plenty of time to get to where you are going. Rushing is a major problem and leads to aggressive driving and stress induced anger. There will always be unexpected traffic, construction, vehicle breakdowns, accidents and other situations that will cause you to run behind. Expect them. Plan for them.

Listen to soothing music or a book on tape if you are frequently caught in rush hour traffic. Understand that it is inevitable and will only last a short while.

How To Respond When Confronted

Unfortunately, you may someday be faced with another driver acting aggressively or confrontationally toward you. Here are some tips to help you respond and hopefully de-escalate the problem.

- DO NOT react or respond. It takes 2 to fight.
- Keep your distance from drivers that seem aggravated, aggressive, or erratic.
- AVOID all conflicts.
- DO NOT make eye contact with the driver or his/her passengers. Swallow your pride and let them go on their way. Take a deep breath and try to relax.
- Be tolerant and forgiving. Be polite and courteous. Your behavior may reduce his or her anger toward you or the situation. They may just be having a bad day.

- Lock your doors and leave space in front of you to pull out if someone approaches your vehicle.
- Do not get out of your car. It may be the only protection you have. If you are being pursued or followed, DO NOT go home. If you can...call 911 or drive to the nearest police station, fire station, hospital, gas station or any other very public, highly crowded place where there will be witnesses. Once you get there HONK your horn or sound the car alarm to gain attention to yourself.
- When and if you see an aggressive driver, get their license plate number and the make and model of the car they are driving. You may be able to help police if there is an incident involving you or another driver.

DAY 6 Make Up Quiz