



# Defensive Driving Transportation

**Defensive driving can have a significant impact on workers' safety.**

## Why It's So Important

A vehicle can be a deadly machine in the hands of a careless driver. A good defensive driving attitude is key to worker safety on the road.

## Without it, the following can happen

- Motor vehicle collisions are the most common cause of death for workers.
- 1 in 4 fatal work injuries involves a vehicle collision/incident.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

- More than 32,000 deaths & 2 million injuries on US roadways annually.
- That's over 87 fatalities and 5,400 injuries each day.
- Human error estimated to be responsible for at least 94% of these crashes.

## Prevention Strategies

### Give Yourself Space



4-6 seconds or longer following distance is most ideal. More in inclement

### Keep Eyes Moving



Keep eyes moving from mirror to mirror.

### Avoid the Fast Lane

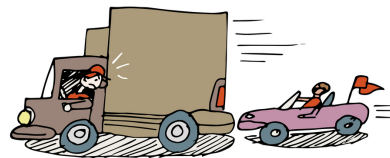


Other lanes provide more escape routes.

### Know Your Blind Spots



### Avoid Aggressive Drivers

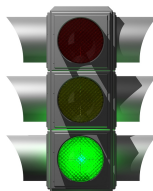


Let them pass!

### Be Patient



### Watch for "Stale Greens"



If a light you're approaching has been green for a while, be prepared to stop.

### Communicate



Make sure other drivers clearly know what you're about to do. Use signals.

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### **Intersection Safe Driving:**

Traffic accidents at intersections are a daily occurrence in every town. Good safe driving procedures are needed to avoid these incidences.

Operators should come to a complete stop at all red light intersections and stop signs.

Cautious starts should be implemented. Jack rabbit starts could allow an accident if the oncoming traffic runs or tries to beat the light. Look across the intersection before you start to move to make sure the path is clear all the way through the intersection and you will not block it if you have to stop.

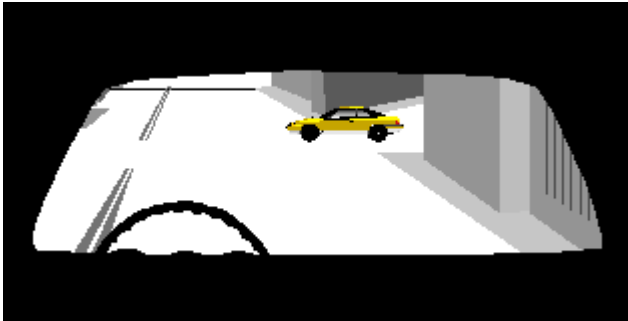
Be on the alert for emergency vehicles.

Never change lanes in the middle of an intersection.

You absolutely must know your right of way and be aware that others may not recognize that this is your right of way.

Do not race to beat a yellow light. This could cost you an injury or a ticket.

When pulling out into a busy road do not trust the turn signals of a car coming towards your intersection. They may have left their blinker on or are planning a turn after your street.



When turning look to be sure oncoming traffic is clear and no pedestrians or bicyclists are crossing the street you are entering.

If the traffic lights at an intersection are completely or partially out, all drivers shall come to a complete stop before entering this intersection, just as you would if a stop sign was posted at the intersection.

# How to avoid common vehicle accidents

## Rear-end collisions

Rear-end collisions involve one vehicle running into the back of another vehicle. Under ideal road conditions, a car traveling at 65 mph needs close to the length of a football field to stop safely. At that speed, the car will travel more than 70 feet in the time it takes the driver to move his or her foot from the floor to the brake pedal (typically 3/4 of a second).

Throw a little rain or snow in the mix and the distance required to stop increases dramatically. Even anti-lock brake systems (ABS) may not stop the vehicle quickly enough to prevent an accident; in fact, ABS brakes can extend the braking distance.

Attentiveness is another big factor in rear-end collisions. A newspaper article cited “driver inattentiveness” as a leading contributor in more than half of all accidents in one state. Remember the speed factor: if the driver looks down for just one second while driving 65 mph, his or her vehicle has traveled almost 100 feet.

## Prevention

Maintaining a safe following distance under all road conditions is the key to preventing rear-end collisions. What’s a safe distance? Under ideal road conditions, the “four-second rule” is the best way to measure a safe distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you. It’s simple to apply and can be used at any speed.

The driver watches the vehicle in front of him pass a fixed object such as a road sign or mile marker. Then he counts, “one thousand one, one thousand two...” If the counting driver’s vehicle reaches the fixed object before he finishes counting, he’s following too closely. He should slow down until he is four seconds behind the vehicle in front of him. Adverse weather of any kind (rain, fog, snow, sleet, etc.) requires additional following distance. And that’s where the “four plus rule” comes in. It adds an additional second for each adverse condition.

And don’t let a lack of attentiveness be a factor. Keep focused on the task at hand – driving. Drivers must constantly scan the road ahead and check rearview mirrors. They should pull over to the side of the road (in a safe place) to look at maps, read paperwork, or talk on a cell phone or radio. When you’re behind the steering wheel, nothing is more important than driving.

## Backing accidents

Although generally minor in nature, backing vehicles are responsible for a very large number of accidents. The potential for serious injuries does exist. Small children are especially difficult for drivers to see when backing large vehicles.

## Prevention

The easiest way to prevent backing accidents is to avoid backing up when possible. Generally speaking, it is usually possible to pull through a parking space so that you can drive out later without backing up.

The second option is to back into a parking space to avoid backing out of it later. This approach is preferable, because the driver has a good view of the space, and conditions shouldn’t change. Weather conditions, and vehicle and pedestrian traffic can change while the driver is away from the vehicle, making a backing maneuver more difficult. If backing-up is necessary, do so cautiously. Walk around and look behind the vehicle before backing.

Remember, vehicles or pedestrians can appear in the area behind your vehicle at any time. Ensure that the vehicle is equipped with sufficient mirrors to give the driver the best view of what is behind the vehicle, especially if there is no line of sight through the back window.

# Driving Tips: Driving at Night

Though there is usually less traffic during nighttime hours, nearly half of all fatal traffic collisions occur after dark. This is because most drivers are not aware of the dramatic difference that darkness can make in their ability to cope with even the most normal driving situations. It causes a great deal of difference in the way that we see our surroundings. It can increase the normal feelings of weariness or fatigue that we experience when driving over long distances. And it makes us much more vulnerable to dangerous situations on the road.

## ***VISION TIPS***

One of the most important differences between day and night time driving conditions is the way in which we see our surroundings. We become completely dependent upon artificial sources of light to show us where we are. We are also much more sensitive to bright lights and other distractions on the road ahead. For this reason, you should study road maps and other written directions carefully before starting out at night. Also, watch carefully for highway signs, pedestrians, animals, slow-moving vehicles, motorcycles, and bicycles that may be on the road ahead of you. All of them are more difficult to see at night.

If you have a passenger in the seat next to you, he or she can serve as a "second pair of eyes" for you. Have him/her keep a close watch for road signs and unexpected hazards on the road ahead.

Eye fatigue is a particularly difficult problem when driving at night. To relieve this problem or prevent it from happening, keep your eyes moving...from side to side, near to far ahead, and so forth.

Keep all windows and mirrors in your vehicle clean and free of defects. They should never be clouded by frost or steam, or marred by large scratches or cracks.

## ***USING YOUR HEADLIGHTS***

It is illegal to drive any motor vehicle on public roads after dark without using the correct lighting equipment. This includes headlights, taillights, and license plate light. Parking lights should be used for parking only, they are not considered strong enough, even in the hours just after sunrise and before sunset. You must have your lights on from sunset until sunrise during periods of rain, snow, hail, sleet or fog, and during other periods when you cannot see the road ahead of you clearly for a distance of at least 500 feet. When you are in doubt as to whether you should use your lights or not, turn them on -- low beam. Not only will this improve your own vision, it helps others to see you as well.

One of the most common and dangerous habits that drivers can get into at night is "overdriving" the headlights of their vehicle. You should never drive so fast that

you are unable to stop within the distance that you can clearly see on the road ahead of you by the light of your vehicle's headlamps. For most vehicles this distance is no more than 350 feet when the headlights are on high beam. In bad weather or other driving conditions when your ability to see clearly is decreased, this distance can be much less. Remember, total stopping distance is the distance your vehicle will travel from the moment the hazard appears until your vehicle comes to a complete stop. Since you cannot see, as far ahead at night, you need to slow down to give yourself more distance to stop your vehicle. The minimum stopping distance for a vehicle with normal brakes traveling 55 mph under favorable road and weather conditions is approximately 230 feet.

You should never have your vehicle's headlights on high beam when you are within 1000 feet of an oncoming vehicle. You should also switch to low beam when you are following another vehicle at a distance of 200 feet or less. Not dimming your lights when you are this close to another vehicle, is not only dangerous to the other driver, it is illegal.

If you do not dim your lights you could cause the other driver to have an accident. If the vehicle is coming towards you, your vehicle could be involved as well. Also, if you dim your lights the other driver is likely to do so as well. If this does not happen you should keep your lights on low beam anyway. If you do not, you are risking more than possibly blinding the other driver. You are endangering yourself as well.

Keep your vehicle's lighting equipment clean and in good working condition. It is particularly important to keep the lenses of your lights clean. Glare can seriously lessen your ability to see clearly.

### ***AVOID THE GLARE***

Many times it can even cause temporary blindness. After dark the most common type of glare you will encounter is that of oncoming headlights, or the reflection of headlights in your rear view mirror from vehicles following you.

If you turn your eyes away from the glare it becomes less serious. You can do this with oncoming traffic by looking toward the right side of the road and watching the white line marking the outside edge of the traffic lane. For glare caused by headlights from behind you, use a "day-night" mirror or adjust your regular mirror to cut out as much of the bright light as possible. It may also help to reduce your speed until your eyes recover from the glare. Be careful not to reduce your speed drastically when you have vehicles following you.

### ***ADJUST SPEED ACCORDINGLY***

Because of decreased visibility, driving too fast is more dangerous after dark than during the day. You can only see as far ahead as your headlights carry. At high speeds this does not give you enough time or distance to stop when you see something dangerous on the road ahead. It is a good idea to allow more

following distance while driving at night in case you or the vehicle ahead of you must make a sudden stop. Highway speed limits are there for good reason is sure to obey them even if you are familiar with the roadway.

Highway speed limits are set for many reasons, but one of the most important is that they protect you from the unexpected. For instance, a deer may suddenly leap out on the road in front of you. There may be an accident ahead that has not yet been reported and your path may be blocked. Bad weather may have torn up or washed out the road or bridge ahead. Besides these situations, there are also times when you may be distracted or suffer some sort of attack while behind the wheel. In these cases, your chances of surviving would be much better if you were driving at a lower, safer speed.

### ***HANDLING EMERGENCIES***

Emergencies are always worse after dark than during daylight hours. There is less traffic and fewer chances for assistance. You have fewer choices of action and you are far more vulnerable to danger.

Here are some "dos" and "don'ts" for road emergencies after dark:

- Pull your vehicle off the main highway as far as possible. If there is a shoulder, use it.
- Turn on emergency flashers if you have them. If not, leave your headlights on low beam and turn on your right turn signal.
- Put up the hood of the car unless it is raining or snowing.
- If you have flares or reflectors place them from 100 to 500 feet behind your vehicle on the right-hand edge of the main roadway. This will warn other traffic where your vehicle is parked. Also, tie a white cloth to the radio antenna or door handle to let emergency personnel know you need assistance.
- If possible stay with the vehicle until help comes, especially if you are on an interstate freeway. The State Patrol monitors freeways with more frequency and a patrol car will be along at regular intervals.
- If you must leave your vehicle carry a flashlight or lantern. Walk on the left-hand side of the road or left shoulder, facing traffic.
- Never leave your vehicle and walk on the traveled portion of the freeway. This is not only very dangerous, it is illegal.