

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

For some of us, the most dangerous thing we do every day is drive to, from, and for work. It's easy to get caught up in the idea that driving is simply part of the job. Drivers quite literally climb into a large and cumbersome projectile and dodge other projectiles at a high rate of speed. In order to complete this task safely on a constant basis, we must practice defensive driving 100% of the time. Our life literally depends on our ability to focus on this task without interruption!

Defensive driving is the ability to reduce the risk of an accident or collision by anticipating dangerous situations, despite adverse conditions and the actions or mistakes of others. This can be achieved through adherence to a variety of general rules and incorporating a set of specific driving techniques.

Defensive Driving Tips:

1. Do a quick walk around of your vehicle to evaluate the condition of your vehicle prior to hitting the road.
2. Secure all loose items in your vehicle. Do not attempt to catch items sliding around in your vehicle.
3. Always keep your eyes moving, constantly looking at your side and rear-view mirrors, up, behind and to both sides of the vehicle.
4. Maintain a visual of two-three car lengths in front of you.
5. When changing lanes, physically turn your head to check your blind spot, followed by checking your side and rear-view mirrors.
6. Look out for motorcycles, bicycles, pedestrians, and smaller vehicles.
7. Leave at least two car lengths between you and the car in front of you. During inclement weather, increase this to five car lengths.
8. Always give yourself an out. Avoid remaining next to other vehicles, move ahead or drop behind them to allow yourself room for maneuvering in case something happens.
9. Stop prior to stop signs and then roll forward slightly to get a better look in each direction.
10. Always use signal lights and be sure to signal ahead of time to communicate your intentions to other drivers.
11. Don't operate communication devices with your hands while driving.
12. Follow the speed limit and pay attention at all times.

Whether you are driving at work or off the job when you are operating a vehicle, you should always have the correct identification on you. You will need identification and other important documents in case of an accident or if you get pulled over. License, registration, and insurance cards should always be somewhere that you can easily access them. Those are things that can get you a ticket if you don't have them on you when asked by law enforcement.

Inspections

Before the first journey of the day, employees are required to perform a safety inspection of the vehicle. Here are some of the items you should inspect:

- Condition of the glass, mirrors, tires, and lights
- Is the tire tread deeper than 1/8th of an inch?
- Are oil and other fluid levels adequate as per manufacturer recommendations
- Belts and hoses
- Wiper blades
- Gauges working as required
- Safety Belts
- AC/Heat

Help reduce the likelihood of vehicle accidents by always practicing the tips mentioned above. Remain alert!