Defensive Driving Meeting Kit



DEFENSIVE DRIVING SAFETY TALK

Getting behind the wheel of your car may seem like a commonplace event, but it is likely to be the most dangerous thing you will do all day long. In the U.S., car accidents are the fifth leading cause of death.

Although you can't control the actions of other motorists, you have a great deal of control over how you operate your vehicle. That means you can increase your chances for a safe trip by taking necessary precautions.

THE DANGERS

Motor vehicle accidents are the major cause of occupational deaths. Most vehicle accidents are the result of driver error or poor operating practices. Drivers assume responsibility for their own safety and that of others on the roadways.

Distracted Driving and Defensive Driving are two ways a driver can make significant changes in driving habits. **Distracted Driving** is defined as any non-driving activity a driver engages in that has the potential to distract them from the primary act of driving and increases the risk of crashing. While **Defensive Driving** is "…driving to save lives, time, and money, in spite of the conditions around you and the actions of others…" as defined by the National Safety Council.

Distracted Driving Example

John decides to take a route where there is less deer activity on to the road. On his way home it begins to rain heavily and the roadway becomes slick so he slows down to 5 MPH below the speed limit. After a few minutes of driving at this speed, the driver behind him begins to flash his lights and tailgate his vehicle. Instead of speeding up or stepping on the brakes, John decides to pull over where it is safe to do so to let the other driver pass.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING TIPS

- Buckle up for safety.
- Follow traffic rules, signs, and signals.
- Keep your eyes on the road, your hands on the wheel, and your attention on traffic.
- Check your rear-view and side mirrors frequently.
- Adjust your speed and driving to changing weather and traffic conditions.

Increase your distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Expect the unexpected and be especially alert in heavy traffic for sudden stops, vehicles passing or moving in and out of lanes, road debris, and work zones.
- Keep cool, yield right of way, and don’t get into disputes with other drivers.
- Pull over into a safe area to make or receive phone calls.
- Don’t drink or take drugs and drive.
- Be extra cautious when your vehicle is in reverse.
- Look ahead at least 10 seconds, 1/4 mile, or to the next intersection or curve.
- Scan any traffic behind you frequently.
- When necessary, reduce your speed.
- Have caution when nearing intersections.
- Be aware of what other drivers do.
- Notify other drivers of what you plan to do.
- Prevent sudden changes in speed or direction.
- Lightly brake when trying to stop on a slippery surface and do not pump ABS brakes. – Do not use cruise control on slippery or icy roads.
- Patiently adjust to the flow of traffic.
- Scan your blind spot before changing lanes.
- Be cognizant of other vehicles changing lanes.

FINAL WORD

Defensive driving skills take account of road conditions and the actions of others to help you avoid potential hazards. By employing these techniques, starting before you get into your vehicle, you’ll minimize your risk on the road. While you can’t plan for every situation you’ll encounter, the defensive driving skills will minimize the risks you face.