

The 3 Keys to Defensive Driving

A defensive driver is someone who recognizes hazards, understands defensive moves, and acts in time to avoid motor vehicle accidents. Are you a defensive driver?

Every time you get behind the wheel you could be at risk, especially when you confront common driving hazards such as:

- Heavy traffic
- Bad road conditions
- Construction
- Vehicles in less than safe operating condition
- Adverse weather conditions
- Poor lighting conditions
- Driver fatigue
- People driving under the influence
- Angry or distracted drivers

And then you have to worry about those who, frankly, are reckless. Whether it's caused by anger, impatience, distractions, or careless attitude, reckless driving involves risk-taking behavior such as:

Speeding
Tailgating
Weaving through traffic
Ignoring traffic laws, signs, and signals

3 Basic Techniques

Here are three basic defensive techniques that can help employees avoid the majority of traffic accidents.

1. Three-second rule. Stay at least three seconds behind the driver in front. To gauge distance, start counting 1,001, 1,002, 1,003, when the car in front passes a utility pole or other roadside landmark. If you reach the utility pole before counting 1,003, you are following too closely. In bad weather, add more time.

2. Pass to stay alive. If you want to pass, look for broken yellow lines and check to see if any traffic is coming toward you. Then look to see if anyone behind you is moving out to pass. Speed up to get around the other vehicle. Get back into the right lane as quickly as possible. Do not pass unless you can see far enough ahead. And if you are being passed, slow down if the other vehicle needs extra room to pass you safely.

3. Keep cool and alert in traffic. Navigating through heavy traffic is both hazardous and stressful. Be ready to react quickly and be prepared for:

- Sudden stops
- Disabled cars
- Cars moving in and out of lanes
- Cars crossing lanes to get to an exit
- Cars passing from any side
- Potholes, debris on the road, or construction

When we share the responsibility for safety in the workplace, everyone wins!!