

Defensive Driving Tips

Drive safe and smart. One of the greatest threats to worker safety is on the road. Whether you drive on the job or commute to work by car, defensive driving is a must for each and every employee at all levels of every organization. Here are some basic rules of defensive driving that will help keep you safe on the road:

- Buckle up for safety.
- Follow traffic rules, signs, and signals.
- Don't speed and keep at least 3 seconds behind the vehicle in front.
- Keep your eyes on the road, your hands on the wheel, and your attention on traffic.
- Check your rearview and side mirrors frequently.
- Adjust your speed and driving to changing weather and traffic conditions.
- 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 to make or receive phone calls.

Why It Matters...

- Motor vehicle accidents are the most common cause of accidental death in the United States. They are also the most common cause of workplace deaths, representing about one in four fatal work injuries.
- Every 12 minutes someone dies in a motor vehicle crash, every 10 seconds an injury occurs, and every 5 seconds a crash occurs. And many of these accidents occur during the workday or during the commute to and from work.
- Motor vehicle crashes cost employers \$60 billion annually. The average crash costs \$16,500, and when a worker has an on-the-job crash that results in an injury, the cost can go as high as \$74,000.

Don't forget vehicle maintenance. A safe, roadworthy vehicle is an indispensable part of driving safely. If the vehicle is unsafe, the driver--and others on the road--are at risk. Be sure to keep your vehicle properly maintained and follow the auto manufacturer's recommendations for oil changes, tune-ups, and so on. Also, inspect your vehicle frequently between service checkups. Here are some things they should look for:

- Are tires in good condition and are they inflated to the right pressure?
- Are headlights and taillights clean and working?
- Are directional signals and emergency flashers operating properly?
- Are oil, coolant, and other fluids at the correct level?
- Are belts and wires in good condition?
- Are brakes working properly?

Driving in the dark. It probably comes as no surprise that there is a greater risk of accidents at night. In addition, night crashes tend to be more severe. To help keep you safe on the roads when it's dark out, here are some safety tips:

- Start taking precautions as soon as the sun goes down. Dusk is one of the most dangerous times of day on the road.
- Slow down and increase your following distance. Darkness makes judging distances harder.
- Don't overdrive your headlights. You need to see this far in order to be able to slow and stop safely when necessary.
- Take precautions not to be blinded by oncoming headlights. Shift your eyes momentarily to the right side of road and use the white lines to guide your steering.

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