

SAFE DRIVING AWARENESS

You cannot control lousy weather, rush hour traffic, or construction zones. But there is still a lot you can do to be prepared to meet driving challenges. Ask yourself these 6 questions.

1. **Is your vehicle safe to drive?**
2. **Are you fit to drive?**
3. **Are you a defensive driver?**
4. **Do you wear your seatbelt?**
5. **Do you obey posted traffic signs?**
6. **Are you aware of pedestrians and bicyclists?**

It does not matter one bit if you drive on the job or on your own time; whenever you get behind the wheel, you run the risk of serious injury or death. If you don't ask yourself those questions about your driving, you could become a statistic. Here are some driving facts...

- **Seatbelts cut the risk of death in an accident by 80%!**
- **Seatbelts reduce serious crippling and maiming injuries up to 60%!**
- **80% of all auto accidents take place within 25 miles of home!**
- **84% of all auto accidents occur at speeds less than 40 mph!**
- **The average driver has 1 chance in 3 of having an accident within one year!**
- **You are 8 times more likely to be killed if thrown from a car while not wearing your seatbelt!**
- **Seatbelts save over 5,000 lives every year!**

Look over these "Rules Of The Road" to help protect you and your passengers.

A. Before You Leave

Spend a few minutes upfront to save time and aggravation later. Do a quick inspection before you get on the road.

- Clean dirty windows and mirrors, as well as dusty or muddy lights.
- Check all the tires for cuts and bulges. Add air, if it's needed.
- Make sure that the levels of gas, oil, radiator and transmission fluids are within safe zones.

B. Fasten Your Seatbelt

For the best protection, make sure you and your passengers wear the vehicle's safety belts properly. Also, secure any small children in approved child restraint seats. Depending where you live, these "rules of the road" may be the law!

C. Remember Your Circle Of Awareness

Imagine a circle around your vehicle. What's in or near the circle? An empty lane? A couple of speeding cars? By always staying aware of this circle and what's in or near it, you reduce your risk of being surprised and injured on the road.

D. Use Your Senses

Your senses can help you detect hazards on the road or problems with your vehicle. Scan your mirrors and blind spots often. Listen for sirens, horns, or screeching brakes. Feel for any unusual vibrations, knocks, or directional pulls. And if you smell smoke or burning rubber, pull over and check out your vehicle.

E. Keep a Safe Driving Distance

Pick a fixed point, such as a tree or a sign, on the side of the road ahead. When the vehicle in front of you passes this point, start counting. Your vehicle should not pass the point until you've counted the appropriate number of seconds. And do not forget, add even more time when the road conditions are bad.

| If You Are Driving: | Count At Least: |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| A Car | 3 Seconds |
| A Small Truck | 3 Seconds |
| A Heavy Vehicle or Motorcycle | 4 Seconds |

F. Use Your Skill & Sense

Driving skill alone cannot keep you safe. But if you couple your skills with some good common sense, you will be better able to handle the challenges of the road. Before you slide behind the wheel, ask yourself those 6 questions mentioned earlier. Think about safe driving before you turn the key and reduce your risk of being involved in an accident.

G. Don't Drive Under the Influence

Alcohol and illegal drugs do not belong behind the wheel. Even in small amounts, they alter your judgment and perception and affect your reaction time. Some prescription medications and over-the-counter remedies can also affect your driving. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any drug and getting behind the wheel.

While a good offense may be the best defense in football, this does not hold true in driving. Obey the rules of the road and be cautious, confident and courteous driver.