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Defensive Driving

A 5-Minute Safety Training Aid

When driving is part of your job duties, whether you are behind the wheel of a rental vehicle, a van, a company car, or an eighteen-wheeler, you are a professional driver. Most drivers can drive around the block without incident, but it takes a dedicated professional to drive perfectly for thousands of miles. When professional drivers are at the controls of any vehicle, they should always remember that defensive driving is a full time job. They take the time to complete pre-trip checklists and perform inspections that familiarize the driver with the vehicle and identifies unsafe mechanical conditions that may need repair.

The driving conditions of today's roads and highways demand a higher level of skill, knowledge, and decision-making ability. A defensive driver is someone who looks out for the mistakes of other drivers; not merely a person who has had the good fortune to avoid accidents.

Safety-conscious drivers:

- develop good habits and practice them continually;
- are prepared mentally and physically every time they are behind the wheel;
- comply with all traffic laws and are courteous to others;
- remember that speed, whether too slow or too fast, kills;
- condition their driving to the current driving conditions;
- maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of them-one vehicle length for each 10 mph; and
- are aware of the vehicle's limitations.

Defensive drivers:

- have foresight that gives them the ability to size up traffic situations on the road ahead;
- start slowing down sooner and apply the brakes the instant they see a hazard developing;

- apply the brakes gradually so they don't spin or grind to a stop so quickly that they risk a rear-end collision; and
- anticipate the incorrect actions of other drivers in time to take the actions necessary to prevent the accident.



Professional drivers:

- practice defensive driving to prevent accidents, in spite of the incorrect actions of other drivers or adverse weather conditions;
- anticipate driving hazards and know how to protect themselves from roadway dangers;
- remain alert and focus their attention on driving by keeping their minds free of distractions;
- watch for and instantly recognize accident-causing factors;
- anticipate traffic problems that may develop and decide whether these developments could be dangerous.

In other words, defensive drivers must learn to maintain and operate their vehicles in a manner that avoids contributing to an accident or being involved in a preventable accident. Remember to drive defensively and practice safety; don't learn it by accident.

References

- Defensive Driving. Ohio Industrial Commission, Division of Safety and Hygiene
- <http://hazard.com/library/topics/drive/def.html>

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Texas Workers' Compensation Commission
E-mail resource.center@twcc.state.tx.us
or call (512) 804-4620 for more information.

Attendance Roster

Refresher safety training brief for your employees on reverse side of this page. Additional information is available from your supervisor. After safety brief presentation, this page is to be completed and filed for documentation purposes.

Company Name	Date Presented
Presented By	Safety Brief Type

Attendees

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