

6 defensive driving tips to avoid reckless drivers.



The road can be a dangerous place. Though there are lines to keep us in our lanes and speed limits to regulate the flow of traffic, it doesn't mean they'll be followed. While we can adhere to the rules of the road for our own safety, not everyone will.

We've all seen it: the person who swerves or changes lanes without a signal, the driver whose eyes are off the road and on the phone, the car that runs a red light, or the driver who goes 20 mph over the speed limit. To combat the unpredictability of other vehicles, it's imperative to be a defensive driver. Our defensive driving tips will help you become a more defensive driver so you can get to your destination safe and sound.

Follow these defensive driving tips:

1. **Be a defensive driver, not a distracted one.** Follow our distracted driving tips to avoid unsafe practices in your car. By being an attentive driver, you'll be alert and prepared for any hazards ahead. Keep your hands firmly on the wheel, your eyes on the road, and your mind on the drive.
2. **Put your head on a pivot.** In addition to watching the car in front of them, defensive drivers watch the cars on either side of and behind them. Regularly switch between glancing in the rearview mirror, left mirror, right mirror, and far ahead. Don't hold your gaze for more than a second, but do this 360-degree scan frequently.
3. **Don't drive in blind spots.** This tip is especially important when driving near large trucks and semis. Speed up (within reason) or hang back to avoid being in another vehicle's blind spot. If they change lanes unexpectedly or recklessly swerve, you'll have room and time to safely move away.

4. **Implement safe following distances.** At a minimum, maintain at least a three-second following distance, which equates to the distance you could travel in three seconds at average speed. Or, think of it like the distance of three cars between yourself and the vehicle in front of you. Increase that distance during night drives, rain, ice, fog, and snow up to twelve car lengths of distance.
5. **Stay away from road rage.** Notice another vehicle being aggressive on the road? Road rage can look/sound like honking, speeding around vehicles, raising arms, cutting others off, etc. When you see these dangerous signs of reckless driving, steer clear. If another driver is angry with you for something on the roads, don't look at them or engage in conflict. Pull off at the nearest stop if you need to take a moment to regroup or want to let them get ahead of you or away from you.
6. **Expect the unexpected.** A top tip for being a defensive driver is staying alert and prepared for anything. You share the roads with other vehicles, pedestrians, bikers, nature, debris, animals, and more. At any point, anything can happen. Don't expect others will be driving safely. When you get behind the wheel with this in mind, you'll have a safer drive.

With these defensive driving tips, you can drive with more confidence and peace of mind. For added protection on the roads, we recommend two things. First, stocking your car with an emergency kit should a disaster arise. And second, talking to one of our local, independent agents about your auto coverage to ensure you have the protection you need for any drive.