

DEFENSIVE DRIVING

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the benefits of driving defensively
- Understand that defensive driving involves legal and personal responsibilities and choices
- Staff will be able to identify risky driving behaviors and attitudes

According to the National Safety Council, on average in the United States:

- Approximately 45,800 people killed in traffic crashes every year (about 125 people every day)
- 2.4 million people are injured in motor vehicle collisions every year
- Statistically, in your lifetime you will be involved in a collision about every ten years

COMMON IMPROPER DRIVING BEHAVIORS

Most driving errors are determined by choice. You as the operator of the vehicle make a conscious decision to drive properly or improperly. According to the National Safety Council's annual Injury Facts publication, the following are the most common improper driving behaviors reported in collisions:

- Improper speed
- Violating right of way
 - Failure to yield
 - Disregarding signal
 - Running stop sign
- Driving left of center line
- Turning improperly
- Passing or overtaking improperly
- Following too closely

DEFENSIVE DRIVING HABITS

- Making safe and legal driving decisions

- Keeping a stress free personal driving space on all four sides of your vehicle
- Getting to your destination safely without compromising other driver's safety
- Being courteous, using common sense and being cooperative
- Understanding the risks of hazardous behaviors and hazardous conditions
 - Road condition
 - Weather conditions
 - You're driving condition and other driver's conditions
- Use vision to see hazards:
 - Scan the road ahead and behind your vehicle
 - Check side and rearview mirrors every three to five seconds (check the gauges on the instrument panel when checking mirrors)
- Use hearing to hear hazards:
 - Hearing emergency vehicles
 - Listening to sounds the vehicle makes, this could alert you to a potential problem with the vehicle
- Use sense of smell to identify hazards:
 - Smell can alert you to a serious problem with the vehicle
- Use sense of touch to identify hazards:
 - The sense of touch can alert you to a problem with the vehicle by feeling through the steering wheel a potential problem with the vehicle or road conditions
- Practice "What if?"
 - Examples:
 - What if that car pulls out in front of me?
 - What if those kids playing run into the street?
 - What if the vehicle in front of me stops suddenly?
- Always use seat belts or other occupant protection systems provided or required (car seats and booster seats for children)
- Do not multi-task while driving (talking on cell phone, eating, reading, etc.)
- Use the three second following distance
- Obey and follow all traffic rules and laws

POLICY

Discuss all county policies relating to safe driving.

CLOSING

- *Encourage discussion about the presentation, the counties driving policies, and how defensive driving can benefit staff.*
- *Remind employees that the decision to drive safe or unsafe is a personal choice and that improper driving could have personal and professional consequences, e.g., injury, litigation, and disciplinary action.*