

DRIVING TECHNIQUES THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE!

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Many people whom I encounter – particularly those who don't know what business I am in – consider themselves a safe driver. Few recognise the need to take defensive driving classes claiming they have never had a traffic accident. However, traffic accidents are becoming more common every day, and are often not the fault of the victims who are badly injured.

Okay – I have to accept that they are, by their own standards not in need of our Defensive Driving course. If anyone else falls into this category then, rather than 'fight' with them I choose to give them access to – by way of a reminder – some basic defensive driving techniques, that can greatly improve one's chances of remaining injury-free and safe on the road.

It's worth noting that defensive driver education came about after thorough research by experts into what commonly causes serious road accidents. Exhaustive analysis into this research has then gone on to produce the learning materials to teach defensive driving tactics. Research now shows that drivers who adopt defensive driving as standard practice when travelling on the roads have a statistically better chance of avoiding serious injury.

Six of the most pragmatic defensive driving techniques are listed below

1. Always anticipate danger and watch the road ahead. Drivers who adopt good defensive driving techniques always watch ahead in case early braking or evasive action is necessary. Leave a good distance between one's vehicle and those ahead, allowing plenty of time to brake early. Even when one has the green light, it is wise to look for other drivers who may run a red light.
2. Wear a seat belt. Statistics long show that wearing a seat belt greatly improves one's chance of surviving an accident. In recent times, many countries incorporate driving without a seatbelt into their traffic violations. It is therefore illegal to drive without a seatbelt.
3. Avoid internal distractions. This includes talking on the telephone, changing your iPod or flicking between radio stations. Make sure your mirrors are set before driving. It is vital for clear views in both directions, as well as avoiding the distraction of adjusting them whilst driving. It is standard when driving safely to avoid any distracting activity at all. This is anything which might take your attention away from the driving job at hand.
4. Keep away from trucks. Keep a watchful eye out for heavy vehicles in the rear-view mirror, and avoid driving in front of or beside them. Particularly watch for and avoid heavy loads which don't look secure, especially when cornering or rounding bends.
5. Keep both hands on the wheel. Safe drivers always grip the steering wheel with both hands. Correct defensive driving technique is to securely hold the wheel at the nine and three o'clock positions at all times.
6. Avoid travelling in the 'blind spot' of another vehicle. 'Blind spots' are a real trap for the unwary. A good rule of thumb when overtaking or following other traffic is 'if you can't see their mirrors, they can't see you!'

Adopting good defensive driving techniques is like riding a bike. Once you learn and incorporate it into your driving routine, it will stand you in good stead for the rest of your life.

And what is the point of acquiring defensive driving techniques? To protect you and your loved ones from trauma and serious injury caused by other irresponsible drivers.

Till next time – drive safe and drive defensively