



## Aggressive Drivers

Even someone who is ordinarily calm, rational, and law-abiding will operate a motor vehicle in an unsafe, hostile manner without regard for others. For some drivers, speeding can lead to following too closely, changing lanes frequently or abruptly without signaling, passing on the shoulder or unpaved portions of the roadway, or harassing motorists who just happen to be in front of them.

Aggressive drivers may run stop signs and red lights, pass stopped school buses, fail to keep right of emergency vehicles, or drive in other reckless ways. They may be impaired by alcohol or drugs, or just frustrated, impatient, or easily irritated.

Sometimes it is best to avoid eye contact with an aggressive driver, especially when conflict could occur. The other driver may interpret eye contact as a challenge, although few aggressive drivers threaten to attempt to physically harm others. Please read the following tips to handle aggressive drivers and avoid becoming one, too.

When confronted by an aggressive driver:

- Avoid eye contact.
- Stay calm and relaxed.
- Ignore harassing gestures and name calling, and do not return them.
- Put your pride in the back seat. Do not challenge an aggressive driver by speeding up or attempting to hold your position in your lane of travel.
- Make every attempt to get out of the way safely. Do not escalate the situation.
- Wear a seat belt and encourage your passengers to do the same.
- Report aggressive drivers to the appropriate law enforcement authorities by providing a vehicle description, location, license plate number, and direction of travel.
- If an aggressive or threatening driver is following you, do not stop or get out of your vehicle. Drive directly to the nearest police station.
- If an aggressive driver is involved in a crash, stop a safe distance from the crash scene. When the police arrive, report the driving behavior you witnessed.

To avoid becoming an aggressive driver:

- Allow enough travel time to reach your destination on schedule. Alter your schedule to avoid driving during peak highway congestion periods. If you are running late, call ahead so you can relax.
- Do not drive when you are angry, upset, or too tired.
- Make your vehicle comfortable. Listen to relaxing music and avoid situations that raise your anxiety. Sit back in your seat, loosen your grip on the steering wheel, and do not clench your teeth.
- Give others the benefit of the doubt; be polite, courteous, and forgiving.
- You can control how you react to other drivers. If someone else drives aggressively, do not retaliate.
- If you have the right-of-way, do not think of it as an absolute right. Be prepared to give up the right-of-way to avoid a crash or prevent confusion. Waiting a few seconds for another driver is far better than risking a crash. Knowing you were "in the right" will not make up for the expense or pain of a collision.

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