



SafetyTalk

Defensive Driving – Highway Traffic

List the hazards on site.

Explain dangers

Not everyone drives well. Some people speed aggressively. Others wander into another lane because they aren't paying attention or they're multi-tasking (e.g., talking on the phone, texting, checking messages, or eating).

Aggressive drivers can cause road hazards to themselves and others sharing the roads. Drivers may follow too closely, make sudden turns without signalling, or weave in and out of traffic.

The length, width, and weight of large trucks can create hazards for drivers of both small and large vehicles. Many fatal collisions between cars and trucks are caused by the car driver's error.

Identify controls

Follow these tips to make the highways—and your next drive—a lot safer.

- **Consider stopping distances.** Trucks need a much longer braking distance than cars. Don't cut in front of a truck. If you do that, it reduces the truck's braking distance and limits the evasive action a truck driver can take.
- **Pass carefully.** When passing a truck, do not drive alongside it for too long. Pass as quickly and safely as possible, and don't cut too closely in front of a truck when re-entering the lane.

- **Be aware of your surroundings.** Check your mirrors frequently and scan conditions 20 to 30 seconds ahead of you. Keep an eye on pedestrians, bicyclists, and pets along the road.
- **Drive defensively.** Do not assume another driver is going to move out of the way or allow you to merge. Presume that drivers will run through red lights or stop signs and be prepared to react. Be considerate of others but look out for yourself. Have an escape route.
- **Maintain an optimal position.** In all driving situations, the best way to avoid potential danger is to position your vehicle where you have the best chance of seeing and being seen.
- **Follow the two-second rule.** Since the greatest chance of a collision is in front of you, use the two-second rule to help you establish and maintain a safe following distance that provides adequate time for you to brake to a stop if necessary.
- **Keep your speed down.** Posted speed limits are meant for ideal driving conditions. It's your responsibility to ensure that your speed matches the actual conditions.
- **Eliminate distractions.** A distraction is any activity that diverts your attention away from the task of driving. Driving deserves your full attention. Stay focused on the driving task.

Demonstrate

- Ask the crew to describe methods to keep a two-second distance between two vehicles.
- Demonstrate stopping distances for small and large vehicles.
- Show the blind spots of any vehicles that workers are expected to drive.