Be An Extra-Safe Driver Meeting Kit

Those who drive for a living would be the first to agree it can be mighty dangerous on crowded roads. Although the common factors of inexperience, recklessness, and aggressive driving contribute to many vehicle accidents, it doesn't explain why so many professional drivers get into accidents. A driver may be trained, experienced, and competent behind the wheel, but the very flood of vehicles competing for space on the roads today presents added danger to all drivers.

WHAT TO KNOW AND DO TO BE A SAFE DRIVER

1. **The best drivers are attentive drivers.** When you're on the road, you need to pay attention to how you're driving. Accidents happen out of the blue, and when you're on the road, it isn't just your driving skills that you need to think about.
2. **Different drivers have had various levels of proficiency.** If you're attentive, you can keep a safe distance from other cars, and follow road signs and signals. This is by far the best way to ensure safety while driving. But there are some other factors you also need to consider:
3. **Never drive without your seatbelts on.** If there is an accident, or if you need to brake suddenly, your seatbelt can save your life.
4. **Do not drink and drive.** Similarly, do not drive under the influence of drugs. Prescription medicines that have an effect on the cognitive system are also detrimental to driving. Only drive when you're completely sober, otherwise, make use of public commute or ask a friend to drive you.
5. **Always obey traffic signs and signals.** If you break these or miss a sign, you could put both yourself as well as other drivers on the road in danger.

6. **If you're approaching a turn, always brake in a straight line before you get to the turn.** Start to slow your car down before you get close to the turn.
7. **Don't use your cell phone while driving.** If you need to urgently communicate with anyone, park your car before you call or text anyone.
8. **Always drive with your headlights on in dim lighting conditions**. This isn't just for your safety, but for the safety of other people on the road as well.
9. **Consider the weather conditions before you drive.** If it's been raining, you'll need to drive more carefully as the tires are prone to skidding. Drive slowly and keep your distance from other cars in the rain.
10. **If it's been snowing, the road conditions could be even worse.** Driving on snowy roads needs even more attention and care, and you must be sure that your tires are in good condition and rated for winter. If the roads are icy, don't drive.
11. **Get your car serviced regularly.** This keeps your car in top working condition and helps you navigate your daily commute with ease and precision.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING – THE MERITS

Defensive driving techniques reduce the likelihood of a collision or incident and can even save costs related to vehicle maintenance and fuel consumption, by driving smoothly and steadily.

Awareness is key to defensive driving, ensuring you are aware of potential hazards and other road users' actions around you, enabling you to take pro-active action to avoid an incident. To enable you to anticipate hazards, look 15 seconds ahead, giving yourself time to react. Aim to always scan your mirrors and look beyond the vehicle in front as this will help you to be aware of possible hazards before it is too late.

Don't trust those around you to make good decisions. Give yourself and drivers around you plenty of time and space. This means keeping a three second gap when following another vehicle. Don't

tailgate other vehicles, as this will remove the opportunity for ample time and space to react to any sudden changes, making it more likely to endanger yourself and those around you.

DRIVING TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES

- Be well-rested before driving.
- Set a realistic goal for the number of miles that you can drive safely each day.
- Avoid distractions, such as adjusting the radio or other controls, eating or drinking, and talking on the phone.
- Stop about every 2 hours for a break. Get out of the vehicle to stretch, take a walk, and get refreshed.
- Avoid aggressive driving by keeping your cool in traffic.
- Reduce your stress by planning your route ahead of time (bring the maps and directions), allowing plenty of travel time, and avoiding crowded roadways and busy driving times.
- Keep up-to-date with the law and rules of the road;
- Do not drive if you are feeling tired or emotional, whether angry or upset;
- Maintain a three second gap when following other vehicles;
- Ensure other road users are aware of your intentions – signal early and clearly;
- Minimise unnecessary lane changes;
- Ensure you have plenty of time to make your journey;

FINAL WORD

For many drivers, the key habits of defensive driving can be learned just by being more proactive and maintaining focus at all times, keeping yourself aware and able to pre-empt any hazards.