



## Basics of Defensive Driving

The best way for drivers to assure their safety and the safety of their passengers and cargo is to always practice defensive driving tactics.

### Three Elements of Safe Driving

These three elements serve as the foundation for defensive driving practices:

- ✔ Driver readiness
- ✔ Vehicle condition
- ✔ Proper attitude

### Safe Driving Habits

- ✔ Keep your eyes always moving and understand your surroundings.
- ✔ Regulate your speed and recognize when conditions require you to slow down.
- ✔ Know your blind spots and check them frequently, especially when changing lanes.
- ✔ Only pass or change lanes when necessary.
- ✔ Signal well in advance of any turns, passes or lane changes.
- ✔ Turn and look behind you when driving in reverse whenever possible. Mirrors are less reliable.

### Determining Right-of-Way

- ✔ Use caution when approaching intersections.
- ✔ Determine right-of-way before entering the intersection.
- ✔ Make your intentions clear by using your turn signals, speed and appropriate gestures.
- ✔ Only proceed after verifying that the intersection is clear of other vehicles or pedestrians.

### Driving at Night

- ✔ Avoid overdriving your headlights by assuring that your stopping distance is within their range.
- ✔ Lower your high beams to avoid impairing the sight of oncoming drivers.
- ✔ Use your brake lights to warn following traffic of upcoming obstacles by lightly tapping your brake pedal.

### Following Distance

Maintain a safe following distance when driving behind other vehicles. The appropriate following distance varies based on factors such as speed, vehicle weight and road conditions.



## Adverse Weather Conditions

Make sure your vehicle is prepared for adverse weather before starting to drive and recognize how the conditions may affect your driving abilities. Avoid driving in extreme weather conditions whenever possible.

## Sharing the Road

- ✔ Stay mindful of pedestrians and bicyclists, especially in high-risk areas such as urban environments and school zones.
- ✔ Know bicyclist hand signals.
- ✔ Only pass bicyclists when you will not endanger them or yourself.
- ✔ Keep three feet of clearance between your vehicle and bicyclists when passing.

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