

Army Safety Gram



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Review Your Driving Habits

Every driver needs to make an occasional review of defensive driving habits. Whether you are driving at work or off the job, in your home town or on vacation, you must drive defensively and without distractions. Defensive driving means being aware the other driver can make a mistake, endangering you. It means watching other vehicles and anticipating their moves. It means focusing on driving and not allowing yourself to be distracted.



Follow these tips for defensive driving:

- ◆ Your vehicle must be in good condition. Check all safety systems such as brakes, windshield wipers and lights. Tires must be in good condition and properly inflated. Make sure windshields and lights are free of obstructions such as dirt.
- ◆ You must be in good shape to drive. Do not operate a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Be rested and alert.
- ◆ Buckle up your seat belt and safety harness before driving. Insist everyone else in the vehicle buckles up.
- ◆ Obey all traffic laws. This includes observing speed limits and passing restrictions.
- ◆ Be prepared for special road conditions and weather problems. Slow down if visibility is poor or if the road surface is rough or wet.
- ◆ Don't jump a red light or try to make it through on an amber light. Someone else might be trying to cut it close and the result will be a collision.
- ◆ As you travel, leave enough space around your vehicle so you can stop or swerve if you have to.
- ◆ Continually look from side to side of your vehicle, and check all mirrors. You need to know what the other drivers are doing.

Here are some reminders for driving safely without distractions:

Certainly people today are rushed, and many have become accomplished at doing other things while driving. However, driving while trying to do other tasks decreases the safety of the driver and passengers, because you do not have as much control of the vehicle and you cannot drive defensively – anticipating other drivers' actions.

- ◆ Make sure you use cell phones safely. The safest thing is to make your calls before you set out. If you receive a cell phone call while you are driving, let the caller leave a message, pull over, and call that person back.
- ◆ Be aware that using a hands-free, voice-activated cell phone can still distract you.
- ◆ A safe driver also stops before checking maps and addresses, looking at paperwork, and dealing with similar distractions.
- ◆ Program your GPS and familiarize yourself with the route before you start driving.
- ◆ Even eating, drinking, fiddling with the radio or vehicle sound system, adjusting heaters and digging items out of the glove box while driving have caused vehicle crashes.
- ◆ Avoid arguments or stressful conversations with passengers that could divert your attention from the road.

Do you drive defensively at all times? Review your defensive driving habits on a regular basis.

