



# Fleet Safety: Defensive Driving Tips

What weighs around 2 tons, can easily cover a distance of over 80 feet in about a second, can strike with an impact that penetrates walls, fences or other objects and is sometimes considered to be a “deadly weapon”?

Whether it's a company vehicle or personal transportation, a vehicle can be a deadly machine in the hands of a careless driver.

Operation of a vehicle must be taken seriously. This powerful device must be used with respect. Driving is not a “right,” but a privilege. A good defensive driving attitude is the key to your safety behind the wheel. Here are some tips:

- Always use your **seat belt**. This includes your lap belt as well as your shoulder belt. Both are necessary for safety. If your vehicle is equipped with an airbag, you must still use seat belts.
- Adjust all **accessories**. Ensure that your mirrors are adjusted as well as your seat prior to driving.
- **Secure loose objects** in the vehicle. If you must make an evasive maneuver to avoid an accident, an unsecured object (tool box, brief case, etc.) may fly around in the vehicle and injure a passenger. Do not place your hard hat on the rear window shelf.
- **Concentrate** on your driving, rather than personal problems or your work. Be attentive to your own actions, the actions of others and the roadway environment.
- Keep a **safe stopping distance** behind the vehicle in front of you. You should be able to prepare to stop within 2 seconds, whatever your speed. Remember, it takes the average person about **3/4 of a second** to recognize a hazard after it is first seen and another **3/4 of a second** to switch from the accelerator to the brake pedal. At 55 mph, your vehicle covers a distance of more than 80 feet per second. You will have traveled about 120 feet before you actually began to brake.
- Be very cautious when adjusting your car radio, using your mobile phone or anything else that will distract you from driving defensively. Studies show **distracted driving** contributes to accidents because the brain cannot focus on driving while multitasking on another activity.
- **Never drink alcohol** and operate a vehicle. Assign a designated driver after social functions that include alcohol use.
- Be alert to “**blind spots**” when changing lanes. Look all directions and always **use turn signals**.
- Keep a **cool head**. Don't drive aggressively and don't take chances.
- Know and **obey** all traffic rules, regulations and laws.

Even if you personally obey all the driving rules, regulations and laws, you are still at risk for a vehicle mishap, serious accident or fatality, due to someone else's carelessness. Follow the above tips to make your chances of “survival” on the road much higher.

**DEFENSIVE DRIVING IS A GOOD HABIT — AND THAT'S NO ACCIDENT!**

