



Drive Defensively

Goals

This safety session teaches employees to:

- Understand the importance and practices of defensive driving.

Applicable Regulations: Cal OSHA
GISO 3203. Injury and Illness
Prevention Program

1 Motor vehicle accidents are a major cause of injury and death on and off the job.

- Motor vehicle accidents are the most common cause of work-related deaths.
- Factors that increase the risk of accident, injury, and death include:
 - Fatigue,
 - Drinking and driving,
 - Not wearing a seat belt,
 - Driving at night, and
 - Using a cell phone or mobile device.

2 Drive safely and obey traffic laws.

- Wear a seat belt.
- Don't speed.
- Obey traffic signals and signs.
 - Stop fully at stop signs and red lights.
 - Stop fully at a yellow light unless it turns yellow when you're already in the intersection.
- Yield to drivers who have the right of way.
- Don't overload a vehicle, and don't load it in a way that blocks your rear or side vision.
- Never pass a school bus when the driver signals to stop.
- Don't drive after drinking alcohol or using drugs.
 - Alcohol and many drugs (including prescription and over-the-counter remedies) slow reactions, blur vision, and impair judgment.

3 Drive defensively so you can respond safely to other drivers and conditions.

- Give driving full attention, keeping your mind and eyes on the road.
- Stay at least 3 seconds behind the driver in front; don't tailgate.
 - To measure seconds, start counting "one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three" as the driver in front passes a pole or other fixed object. You should not reach the object before you reach "one thousand three."
- On a two-lane road, pass on the left only, after signaling.
 - Be sure the other driver sees you and that you have enough room to pass.
- Keep checking your rearview and side mirrors for approaching traffic.
 - Be aware of your mirrors' blind spots.
- Pull over and stop if you have to read a map, make a phone call, etc.
- Don't drive when you're sleepy.
 - If you start to nod off, pull over, lock the car, and nap.

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- Stay constantly alert to other drivers, road construction, potholes, debris, etc.
- Don't talk on the phone, send or read text messages, or use mobile devices in any way while driving. Pull over to a safe place instead.

4 Take special precautions at night.

More accidents happen at night because drivers can't see so well and may be tired.

- Turn on headlights as soon as it begins getting dark.
- Increase your following distance.
- Use high beams only if no one is in front of you or coming toward you.

5 Always expect other drivers to do the unexpected.

Be especially cautious, and leave yourself room to maneuver in heavy traffic and around road construction where drivers are more likely to:

- Pass on the right or on the shoulder;
- Try to dart in and out of lanes; or
- Stop or swerve suddenly.

6 Maintain your vehicle for safety.

- Regularly rotate tires, and replace them when they're worn.
- Check tire pressure when it's cold, and keep tires at recommended levels.
- Maintain proper oil and antifreeze/coolant levels.
- Keep lights, mirrors, and windows clean.
- Replace windshield wiper blades periodically.
- Carry emergency equipment, such as:
 - Spare tire, jack, lug wrench, and jumper cables;
 - Wrenches, pliers, screwdrivers;
 - Unopened containers of oil and other vehicle fluids; and
 - Flashlight and safety flares.



Discussion Points:

Offer and ask for examples of experiences that underline the need to "expect the unexpected" to prevent accidents when driving.



Conclusion:

- Defensive driving is safe driving.
- Driving is a skill, and your vehicle is a heavy and potentially dangerous machine. To prevent accidents, give driving your full attention.



Test Your Knowledge:

Have your employees take the Drive Defensively quiz. By testing their knowledge, you can judge their understanding of defensive driving and whether they need to review this important topic again soon.

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