

# YOUR SAFETY IQ

## Do You Think Defensively?

On the highway, aggressive-ness is no virtue. In fact, aggressive driving can get you into trouble and can create hazards. It could even cause you to lose your job and your license.

A defensive driver is a safe driver. If you can claim to be one, it means you're prepared to take responsible, appropriate action when you're suddenly faced with a potentially dangerous situation. Being a defensive driver is part of being a true professional.

### **Avoid Errors**

Traffic experts say that most accidents are caused by driver error. Try to make your driving as error-free as possible. Execute every maneuver correctly and safely. At the same time, you must constantly anticipate, and avoid the effects of, any errors made by other drivers or pedestrians.

### **Be Prepared**

One of the most valuable skills you'll ever develop is to be prepared for anything the carelessness of other drivers, changes in weather or unexpected

hazards along the road. Defensive driving has three primary elements: recognizing the hazard, understanding the defense and acting in time. When multiple dangers arise at the same time, you must be able to assign priorities in a split second and act accordingly.

A defensive driver also knows that problems may develop with his vehicle. Know what can go wrong and know how to deal with it.

### **Preventing Accidents**

Two of the best ways to avoid accidents are to maintain a safe speed and keep a safe following distance. As a professional, the defensive driver avoids the bad habit of following other vehicles aggressively and forcing them to get out of his way.

### **Your Attitude**

Your attitude toward other drivers also is a part of the defensive technique. In the course of a day, many styles of driving will pass by. Some will try your patience and others will make you angry. Keep your temper, even when someone

else drives badly. An unprofessional reaction will only show your lack of self-control. Take appropriate steps to avoid an accident and be on your way.

### **Stay On Guard**

Problems can arise if you travel the same route often. Your defenses may be down because you think you know the road backwards and forwards. Most likely you do, but the unexpected can always crop up. Always be ready for something unusual to happen, no matter how well you know the road. It's when you stop paying attention and stop being defensive that troubles can arise.

The defensive driver keeps abreast of weather conditions ahead. In most places, the weather can change rapidly. A driver should know what to expect and should be prepared to deal with it.

### **Be the Best**

Defensive drivers are the best on the road. The reason is obvious: they're alert and ready to react, no matter what happens.



Always be prepared for the unexpected, no matter how well you know your route.