

Defensive Driving

For some of us, the most dangerous thing we do every day is drive to and from work. For others, driving is simply part of the job. To complete these tasks safely daily we must practice defensive driving.

Defensive driving is the ability to reduce the risk of accident or collision by anticipating dangerous situations, despite adverse conditions and the actions or mistakes of others. This can be achieved through adherence to a variety of general rules and incorporating a set of specific driving techniques into our everyday commute.

1. Do a quick walk around your vehicle to evaluate the condition of your vehicle prior to getting on the road.
2. Secure all loose items in your vehicle. Do not attempt to catch items sliding around in your car.
3. Always keep your eyes moving, constantly looking at your side and rear-view mirrors, up, behind and to both sides of the vehicle. Maintain a visual of two to three car lengths in front of you.
4. When changing lanes, physically turn your head around to check your blind spot, followed by checking your side and rear-view mirrors.
5. Look out for motorcycles, bicycles, pedestrians, and smaller vehicles.
6. Leave at least two car lengths between you and the car in front of you. During inclement weather, increase this to five car lengths.
7. Always give yourself an out. Avoid remaining next to other vehicles, move ahead or drop behind them to allow yourself room for manoeuvring in case something happens.
8. Stop prior to stop signs and then roll forward slightly to get a better look in each direction.
9. Always use signal lights and be sure to signal ahead of time to communicate your intentions to other drivers.
10. Avoid using a cell phone. In South Africa it is illegal to use a mobile device while operating a vehicle. If necessary, always use a hands-free device.
11. Follow the speed limit and always pay attention.

Help reduce the likelihood of vehicle accidents by always practicing the tips mentioned above. Remain alert and always remember a defensive driver is a safe driver.

Discussion Notes: