

Drive smarter: 10 defensive driving habits that save lives

Accidents can happen in the blink of an eye but staying alert and prepared can make all the difference. These tips can help you sharpen your defensive driving skills and stay safe on the road.

1. **Keep your eyes on the road:** Avoid distractions like cell phones, eating, or fiddling with the radio. Keep your attention on driving.
2. **Buckle up:** Seat belts cut your risk of injury in a crash by 50%. Make sure everyone in the car is strapped in.
3. **Keep a safe distance:** Leave plenty of space between you and the car ahead to allow for sudden stops. Look ahead to anticipate potential hazards.
4. **Stay calm:** Avoid road rage. If someone tailgates you, change lanes instead of braking suddenly. Give other drivers space and use your horn sparingly.
5. **Watch blind spots:** Know your vehicle's blind spots and avoid lingering in others'.
6. **Be cautious at intersections:** Always scan both directions when approaching intersections. Even with a green light, proceed carefully and watch for fast-moving vehicles.
7. **Yield when in doubt:** If you're unsure who has the right of way, play it safe and let the other driver go first.
8. **Signal your moves:** Use turn signals to communicate your intentions. Smooth, predictable driving makes the road safer for everyone.
9. **Don't drive tired or distracted:** Don't drive if you're drowsy or distracted—it's not worth the risk.
10. **Follow the rules:** Obey speed limits, signs, and all traffic laws. It's one of the easiest ways to stay safe.

