

Anyone who drives for work could come across **aggressive driving** – putting other drivers or property at risk by breaking traffic laws, usually on purpose. Aggressive behavior ranges from unsafe behavior like following too closely behind another vehicle to **road rage** – the extreme end of the aggressive-driving scale that can end in violence. Road rage behavior (other than shouting or inappropriate gesturing) is a criminal offense. Examples include angry and violent behaviors like fighting and physical assault.

Aggressive driving behaviors not labeled as road rage are moving violations that are subject to fines or jail time and include:

- tailgating;
- speeding;
- running stop signs or lights;
- cutting off or blocking another vehicle; and
- passing a vehicle on the wrong side.



Aggressive driving behavior could stem from the power and privacy that drivers feel when they are shielded from the outside world in their vehicles. Another trigger is frustration that some drivers may feel when they come across situations like vehicles traveling under the posted speed limit. Also, not all behavior labeled as aggressive driving is intentional – driver inattention or errors in judgment are factors in some cases.

What to do if you come across an aggressive driver

- *Steer clear of stressed drivers.* Avoid eye contact with them, ignore any gestures they direct toward you, and don't provoke them by flashing your lights or using your horn excessively.
- *Don't challenge aggressive drivers by speeding up or refusing to move from your travel lane.* Instead, try your best to move out of the aggressive driver's way.
- *Beware of speeding vehicles and let them pass when they approach.* A driver might be speeding due to an actual emergency.
- *Leave enough space around your vehicle to pull away if an aggressive driver approaches your vehicle.* Do not get out of your vehicle – it can protect you.
- *If you are concerned for your safety, call 9-1-1* from a safe, public place to report incidents or patterns of aggressive driving to local law enforcement.

How to keep from becoming an aggressive driver

- *Plan ahead and allow plenty of time to reach your destination.* If you find that you are going to be late, be late. It is better to arrive at your destination safely a little later than to be involved in an incident. Remember that you cannot control the traffic – only how you react to it.
- *Avoid tailgating other drivers.* Be safe and courteous by following at least two seconds behind the driver in front of you to give yourself enough room to stop in an emergency and to give other drivers enough room to change lanes. Pick a fixed spot. When the vehicle ahead passes the spot, count "one thousand one, one thousand two." If you pass the same spot before you finish counting, you are following too closely. Increase the distance in poor weather.
- *Drive in the passing lane only when passing.* The left lane of multi-lane roadways is the passing lane and should be used only when passing another vehicle. After passing, move back into your lane only when you can see both headlights of the vehicle you passed in your rearview mirror.

- *Use your turn signal when changing lanes or turning.* This lets other motorists know your plans before you make a move.
- *Don't speed.* Your reasons for speeding do not outweigh the costs, which include a greater chance of losing control of your vehicle, and more severe crashes and injuries.
- *Try not to let driving conditions upset you, and don't take your frustrations out on other drivers.* Listening to calming music might help. Being a tolerant driver helps assure that you arrive safely at your destination.

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