



C3285

**Defensive Driving: I
Could See It Coming**

Leader's Guide

I COULD SEE IT COMING

This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation. Featured are:

INTRODUCTION: A brief description of the program and the subject that it addresses.

PROGRAM OUTLINE: Summarizes the program content. If the program outline is discussed before the video is presented, the entire program will be more meaningful and successful.

PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION: These sections will help you set up the training environment, help you relate the program to site-specific incidents and provide program objectives for focusing your presentation.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Questions may be copied and given to participants to document how well they understood the information that was presented. Answers to the review questions are provided separately.

INTRODUCTION

Even if you think you are the best automobile driver on the road, you need to polish your defensive driving skills from time to time. There are some specific things you can do to improve these skills and make sure you see what's coming. This video examines the factors that cause auto crashes and provides seven defensive driving strategies that can prevent these incidents:

1. Get Ready
2. Stay Focused
3. Be Aware
4. Look Ahead
5. Back Off
6. Expect Mistakes
7. Be Noticed

PROGRAM OUTLINE

BACKGROUND

- Crashes are caused by three factors: drivers, vehicles and road conditions.
- Vehicle malfunction and poor driving conditions cause a fair number of crashes, but the vast majority are caused by people.
- Most of the crashes reported each year are caused by speeding, failing to stop, following too closely, driving over the center line and a variety of other bad driving practices.

GET READY

- Vehicle malfunction is one of the three factors that causes crashes and one that you have some control over. That's why staying safe on the road starts before you even put your key in the ignition.
- Even though we rarely think to do it, it only takes a few seconds to do a pre-trip inspection. It may help you avoid a crash or breakdown.
- Begin by looking over the outside of the vehicle for damage, leaks and loose parts.
- Open the hood and check the fluid levels.
- Inspect the tires for wear and proper inflation. Also, look for loose or missing lugs.
- Make sure everything in your vehicle is in place and won't shift while you're driving.
- Get in the vehicle, start the engine and listen to how it sounds.

- Make sure your lights, turn signals and windshield wipers are working properly.
- Since loose objects in the floor might get under the brake pedal, keep your floors clean. Remove items from the dash that could fall or distract you.
- Another part of getting ready is to use your safety equipment. Make sure your mirrors are adjusted properly and put on your seatbelt; it's the most important safety device in your vehicle, so be sure to wear it all the time.

STAY FOCUSED

- Every time you get behind the wheel, you're risking your health, your happiness and even your life, so staying focused on your driving doesn't seem too much to ask.
- Every day, however, we see plenty of people who aren't paying attention. We've all seen drivers who are eating, talking on the cell phone, putting on makeup and doing who knows what.
- We know the kinds of things that can distract us: handheld computers or maps for instance. Don't use them while you're driving; figure out where you want to go before you get behind the wheel or pull off the road if you need to do so.
- Even changing the radio station, worrying about work or just plain daydreaming can take your mind off of what you are doing.
- Driving is the most dangerous thing most of us will do on any given day, and most collisions involve someone who is either preoccupied or inattentive.

BE AWARE

- Every time you are behind the wheel, it is vital for you to be aware of everything that's going on around you.
- Keep your eyes moving, scanning your entire field of vision. Consciously analyze everything that you see.
- Don't look at any one object too long. When you do, it reduces your peripheral vision, one of your most important tools in preventing crashes.
- Check your mirrors every five to eight seconds and be aware of your blind spots. You may need to lean forward or look over your shoulder to get a better view.
- Use your mirrors to keep track of vehicles moving in and out of your blind spots.

LOOK AHEAD

- Look ahead; the road in front of you can hold potential hazards, so do everything you can to get a clear view of what lies ahead.
- On an open highway, you should be able to see about a quarter of a mile ahead of your vehicle. This should allow for plenty of time to safely react to such things as road construction, lane closures, traffic slowdowns and interchanges.
- In congested areas, you should be able to see about one and a half blocks ahead of you. Watch for construction and blocked lanes, double-parked cars and upcoming traffic lights.
- Be aware of side streets and how traffic enters or crosses the lane that you're in.
- Pay attention to brake lights, not only on the vehicle right in front of you, but also four or five vehicles ahead. That will allow you to anticipate better and avoid sudden stops.

- If you see a car up ahead of you that nose dives, it means that they have made a sudden stop and you should slow down and be ready to stop also.
- Watch out for animals like deer both in and out of town; their behavior can be sudden and confused. Watch for them in the ditches at the sides of the road and in the center median. At night, look for reflections from their eyes.
- If you do see an animal, try to anticipate which way it will go; they will usually go the way the head is pointed.
- If you see one animal, there's probably more. So stay attentive.

BACK OFF

- One of the most annoying and dangerous displays of aggressive driving is tailgating. Following too closely is responsible for thousands of crashes each year.
- Tailgating is just the most blatant example of ignoring recommended distance requirements. Keeping a cushion of safety—a circle of open space around your vehicle—is essential when it comes to defensive driving.
- When you're on the road, you need to watch the distance between your vehicle and those ahead of you, behind you and to both sides of you.
- The most important is the distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you. If the guy ahead of you slams on his brakes, you know you're not going to be able to stop on a dime.
- You can easily determine your following distance by finding a fixed object (like a sign), watching when the vehicle ahead of you passes it and counting how many seconds it takes until you pass the same marker.
- It's recommended that you leave a two-second following distance if you're driving a passenger car under 40 miles per hour. If you're driving 40 or more, you'll need at least three seconds to stop.
- For larger vehicles, you should have at least a four-second following distance under 40 miles per hour and at least a five-second distance over 40.
- If the roads are wet, snowy or icy, you'll need even more time—maybe seven, eight or even 10 seconds to allow ample room for stopping.
- It's easy to get frustrated when you're following at a safe distance and someone cuts in front of you. When that happens, the best advice is to back off. If you speed up, you really don't gain that much time and you sacrifice safety.
- The best thing to do when someone is following you too closely and won't pass is to get out of their way. Change lanes and let them pass.

EXPECT MISTAKES

- You can't rely on other drivers to always do the right thing; mistakes happen. We know; we've all made them.
- If a good driver like you can make mistakes, we should assume other drivers can and will too.
- You have no idea who's driving the vehicle next to you. It could be someone who has been up for 48 hours, someone reaching for a dropped coffee mug or a 15-year-old going for a joy ride.
- When you're prepared for mistakes from the drivers around you, you take caution to another level.
- One of the places where people make common mistakes is at intersections. Don't automatically enter an intersection just because a light turns green; slow down and look both ways.

- If you're turning left and there are two left turn lanes, choose the lane farthest to the right. This position allows you to check drivers in your left blind spot and you won't have drivers to your right while turning.
- While you're waiting to turn, wait with your wheels straight. That way, if you're rear-ended, your vehicle won't be pushed into oncoming traffic.
- We've all seen drivers who cut in and out of traffic. Anticipate where and when those drivers might pull a quick maneuver or lane change and give yourself space to move out of the way.
- In situations where someone has to yield, be prepared to be that someone. There are plenty of drivers who don't understand the concept of right-of-way and plenty who believe it's always their turn.

BE NOTICED

- When you're on the road, you want to know what other drivers are going to do. They want to know the same thing from you, so don't keep them guessing; be noticed.
- When you're going to turn or change lanes, always use your turn signal. Signal well in advance and keep your signal on until you've completed your turn or changed lanes.
- If you have to slow down, stop or avoid a hazard ahead, flash your brake lights by tapping on your brake pedal a few times. Unless there's an emergency, never stop suddenly.
- If you need to pull off the road, put on your hazard lights, slow down and pull off to the right as far as possible. Check for traffic before opening your door.
- Don't be afraid to use your horn or flash your headlights. Make sure you're noticed.

PREPARE FOR THE SAFETY MEETING OR TRAINING SESSION

Review each section of this Leader's Guide as well as the videotape. Here are a few suggestions for using the program:

Make everyone aware of the importance the company places on health and safety and how each person must be an active member of the safety team.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Copy the review questions included in this Leader's Guide and ask each participant to complete them.

Make an attendance record and have each participant sign the form. Maintain the attendance record and each participant's test paper as written documentation of the training performed.

Here are some suggestions for preparing your videotape equipment and the room or area you use:

Check the room or area for quietness, adequate ventilation and temperature, lighting and unobstructed access.

Check the seating arrangement and the audiovisual equipment to ensure that all participants will be able to see and hear the videotape program.

Place or secure extension cords to prevent them from becoming a tripping hazard.

CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person the opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.

Explain that the primary purpose of the program is to help viewers polish their safe driving skills by explaining seven strategies for driving defensively.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Lead discussions about specific driving hazards that may be encountered in your area and how crashes can be avoided.

After watching the videotape program, viewers will be able to explain the following:

- What to look for during a pre-trip inspection;
- How to stay focused, be aware and look ahead while driving;
- How to create a safety cushion around their vehicles;
- What types of mistakes they should anticipate by other drivers.

I COULD SEE IT COMING
REVIEW QUIZ

Name _____ Date _____

The following questions are provided to check how well you understand the information presented during this program.

1. What causes the majority of vehicle crashes?
 - a. vehicle malfunction
 - b. poor driving conditions
 - c. people

2. Your seatbelt is the most important safety device in your vehicle.
 - a. true
 - b. false

3. How often should you check your mirrors while driving?
 - a. every five to eight seconds
 - b. every 15 to 18 seconds
 - c. every 30 to 35 seconds

4. On an open highway, you should be able to see about _____ ahead of your vehicle.
 - a. one and a half blocks
 - b. a quarter of a mile
 - c. a half of a mile

5. The most important distance between vehicles is between your vehicle and one _____ of you.
 - a. ahead
 - b. behind
 - c. beside

6. If you are turning left and there are two left turning lanes, you should choose the lane farthest to the left.
 - a. true
 - b. false

7. Unless there is an emergency, you should never stop a vehicle suddenly.
 - a. true
 - b. false

ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUIZ

1. c

2. a

3. a

4. b

5. a

6. b

7. a