

Road Rage Is On The Rise!

Are Your Drivers At Risk?



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A road rage altercation allegedly led to the shooting death of 24-year-old Jesus Benitez-Jaimez on July 14, 2016. Jesus had pulled off the road in Panorama City, exited his vehicle, and walked back to confront the driver of another car behind him. When he approached the other driver's window, Benitez-Jaimez was shot multiple times. He stumbled back to his own car, collapsed outside the driver's door, and died at the scene, while the shooter drove away.

Incidents like this—and the aggressive behaviors that lead up to them—are becoming more common, according to a study released by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety in July 2016. The foundation reports that nearly 80% of surveyed drivers admitted to behaving angrily, aggressively, or with all-out “road rage” at least once in the previous year. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety believes that number could be low, as people tend to underreport their own bad behavior. Aggressive driving is a serious problem and it is a factor in more than one-half of all traffic fatalities in the U.S.

Safe driving requires personal responsibility to use sound judgment, reflexes, experience, and common sense—every time you are behind the wheel of a vehicle. Another important element of safe driving is courtesy. Be courteous at all times!!!

So, what types of behaviors could put your drivers at risk and what can do to reduce that risk?

Displaying Aggression

Speeding is the most common aggressive driving behavior, factoring into more than 30% of fatal crashes. Other behaviors that result from anger, impatience, or competitiveness behind the wheel, or from a desire to punish other drivers, include:

- **Tailgating.** More than one-half of all drivers (51%) admit to purposefully “riding the bumper” of the driver ahead.
- **Yelling.** Almost one-half of all drivers (47%) say they’ve yelled at another driver.
- **Honking.** Fully 45% of all drivers have honked at another driver out of annoyance or anger.
- **Angry gestures.** One-third of drivers (33%) admit to having done this.
- **Blocking lane changers.** Nearly one-quarter of drivers (24%) have blocked another driver who was trying to change lanes.
- **Cutting off another vehicle.** Approximately 12% of drivers have intentionally done this.
- **Confronting another driver.** Approximately 4% of drivers have exited their own vehicle to confront another driver, as Jesus Benitez-Jaimez did, to fatal results.
- **Bumping or ramming.** Approximately 3% of drivers have intentionally made contact with another vehicle.
- **Aggressively taking someone else’s parking space.**
- **Not yielding to another vehicle appropriately.**

Are Your Drivers Part Of The Problem?



Many drivers agree that aggressive driving is a problem—when other drivers behave that way. However, drivers may fail to recognize in themselves the behavior that they find so distressing in others.

How can you tell if your drivers might be driving in ways that make them less safe? You can start by considering complaints about your employee’s driving, as well as evidence suggestive of aggressive driving (for example, speeding or reckless driving tickets, which can result from aggressive behavior).

You should also look for drivers who engage in other unsafe behaviors behind the wheel, such as running red lights. Drivers who are generally more careless of their safety and the safety of others are more likely to show aggression. As an example, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety notes that drivers who reported speeding on a freeway in the past month were four times more likely to have intentionally cut off another vehicle.

Aggressive drivers are more likely to be young and male. Male drivers and drivers between the ages of 19 and 39 were significantly more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors than women or older drivers. Male drivers were more than three times as likely as female drivers to have exited a vehicle to confront another driver or intentionally rammed another vehicle.

Driver Safety Tip



Drivers can learn whether they display low, moderate, or high levels of aggressive behaviors with the online quiz from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety at <http://bit.ly/2b6Lws0>.

Dealing with Traffic Congestion

Small changes in your driving habits can help relieve chronic traffic congestion, according to the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). Avoid the following driving behaviors:

- **Rubbernecking.** Slowing down to look at collisions or virtually anything else out of the ordinary.
- **Tailgating.** Following too closely.
- **Unnecessary lane changes.** Weaving in and out of freeway lanes.
- **Inattention.** Eating, grooming, talking on a cell phone, text messaging, reading the newspaper, etc.
- **Operating a poorly-maintained or malfunctioning vehicle or running out of fuel.**

Dealing With Other Drivers

What about those “other drivers” who your drivers might encounter—the ones who will cut them off in traffic, make obscene gestures, yell at them, tailgate them, maybe even get out of their vehicles to directly confront your drivers?

Here’s what your drivers can do to prevent angry confrontations from developing or to calm things down if they find themselves in a threatening situation:

- **Be cautious.** Drivers should yield when they can and never deliberately cause another driver to brake, speed up, or change direction.
- **Be gracious.** When other drivers cut them off, tailgate, run the light, or behave aggressively, drivers should give them the benefit of the doubt. Maybe they were just not paying attention, or maybe they're just having a bad day.
- **Be unflappable.** Responding to another driver's aggressive behavior can escalate the situation. Drivers should avoid eye contact with angry drivers, never make angry gestures at other drivers, try to maintain space around their own vehicle, and contact 911 if they feel threatened.

Sources:

-AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

-DOT

-MCSR

-DMV State of California (California Driver Handbook – Sharing The Road)

-California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS)

Questions or Assistance:

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