Avoiding Road Wrath



Safety Talk

Road rage is the name of a growing problem on our streets and highways. Angry drivers can cause collisions and have been known to assault, stab or shoot drivers who annoy them.

Keep control of your emotions when you drive. Take a few deep breaths, check your speedometer and slow down mentally and physically if necessary. Allow enough time to get to your destination, taking into account delays related to weather, heavy traffic, construction and other drivers' errors. Otherwise, you might find yourself in a collision or an angry confrontation.

How do you recognize the angry driver before it is too late?

Here are some behaviors to watch for:

- Speeding, especially in congested areas, with no regard for other vehicles or pedestrians.
- Failing to obey stop signs and red lights.
- Obstructing other vehicles by preventing them from passing or changing lanes.
- Bumping another vehicle from behind.
- Weaving from lane to lane, speeding and tailgating.
- Passing on the right side of a vehicle and passing on the road shoulder.
- Making rude gestures and facial expressions.
- Yelling, screaming, horn-honking, flashing headlights or deliberately blinding other drivers with bright lights.

When you do see an angry driver, stay out of his or her way! If an aggressive driver tries to pick a fight with you, back down. If you retaliate, the incident can quickly escalate from angry to life-threatening.

How can you protect yourself and others from a raging driver?

Here are suggestions:

- Move out of the way.
- Do not challenge or compete with the angry driver by speeding up or

tailgating. Never retaliate by cutting the other driver off.
- Avoid eye contact. Do not respond to nasty gestures.
- Call the police at a roadside telephone or on a cellular phone. Be ready to describe the vehicle and give the license number. Authorities will also want to know the location and direction of travel.
- If an aggressive driver you have encountered is involved in a crash, stop and wait for police so you can report what you witnessed.
- Drive your best at all times. While there is no excuse for aggressive behavior on the road, your driving error may tick another driver off.

If another driver is baiting you, keep your distance. Just calmly drive on your way and avoid a fight.