



Defensive Driving – Passing

Defensive driving is driving so as to prevent accidents in spite of the incorrect actions of others or adverse driving conditions, such as weather, traffic, lighting, vehicle or road condition, or the driver's physical or mental state. The defensive driver assumes that other drivers may make mistakes and is on guard in the event an error is made.

Your safety program should include defensive driver training on the proper way to pass. Safe passing maneuvers require well developed skills and judgment. Passing tasks include checking sight distance ahead, checking mirrors for rear traffic, checking for passing traffic, estimating speed and position of approaching vehicles, estimating the time needed to safely pass, accelerating, steering, and checking for traffic entering from side roads. Because the driver must perform several tasks in a short time during passing, the chance of an error is high, unless the maneuver is done cautiously. As it may take a long time before an opportunity to pass safely arises, non-defensive drivers sometimes take risks and assume other drivers will compensate for their own aggressiveness. The following are management areas that should be addressed regarding defensive driving and tips to provide your drivers to help them become defensive drivers.

Management Issues

Yes No

Have your drivers ever been trained on how to perform safe passing maneuvers?

Do you know if your drivers are practicing safe passing maneuvers?

Do you periodically have qualified personnel ride with your drivers to assess their driving habits?

Do drivers properly adjust mirrors and perform a pre-trip inspection to assure that all lights are functioning properly?

Are drivers aware of the concept of a 'preventable accident' (A preventable accident is one in which the driver failed to exercise every reasonable precaution to prevent the accident. This is irrespective of the extent of property damage and/or personal injury, to whom it occurred or the location of the accident.)?



Driver Tips

To be a defensive driver while passing, your drivers should:

- Be certain that no one is passing them before starting to pass.
- Assume the driver in front of them does not know that they are passing, as that driver may pull to the left to pass a vehicle in front or make a left turn.
- Watch carefully for vehicles that may be entering the roadway from side roads or driveways.
- Assume vehicles approaching from the opposite direction will not see them or slow down sufficiently for them to complete their passing maneuver.
- Watch out for vehicles passing other vehicles from the opposite direction.
- Back off if the vehicle they are trying to pass speeds up.
- Always signal their intentions to pass.

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