Driving Safety Protocol

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Created: February 2010
Updated: February 2010
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I. PURPOSE

Laws and procedures are designed to make driving safer. However, many drivers become more relaxed as they drive. As driving becomes second nature, drivers often pay too little attention to the driving task. Defensive Driving is minimizing the odds of accident occurring. This protocol is designed to assist employees in using Defensive Driver tactics to be safe while driving.

III. POLICY

Follow Defensive Driver Recommendations
Comply with all Driving regulations
Complete the EGUSD required Employee Auto Use form
Possess a valid California driver’s license
Maintain adequate insurance on the personal vehicle used for company business

IV. PROCEDURE

As with many other things in life there is a science part and an art part to this. Things like checking tire pressure or consulting a map in advance definitely go to the science part and can be taught and reproduced easily in no time. On the other hand anticipating other drivers' moves cannot be digitized, and depends heavily on your experience. Still, this is a skill that one can acquire. It just takes some time and dedication, and the time is in the order of years rather than weeks or months.

- Anticipating other drivers' moves: Try to anticipate the worst in others. It may sound cynical and is not a good rule to follow in life but, in defensive driving, it pays to anticipate the mistakes of other drivers on the road. For instance, many drivers routinely signal a turn but don’t turn at all. Meanwhile, others don’t signal at all and then suddenly turn. Many people disregard stop signals or try to run red traffic lights so keep a watchful eye out for these instances.

- Clearly communicating your existence and intentions to other drivers:
  - Make signaling a habit: One of the best defensive driving techniques is to signal every time you turn or change lanes. That way, you never catch other drivers by surprise. Make signaling a habit. Even if the road appears to be deserted and there seem to be no other vehicles around, signaling your intent is always an excellent defensive driving practice.
  - Let other drivers know of your intentions early: Sudden stops, turns and lane changes often lead to accidents because they catch other drivers by surprise. Hence, one of the basic rules of defensive driving is to clearly communicate to other drivers exactly what you are about to do. For this reason, it is crucial that your brake lights, head lights,
signal indicators and other driving lights are working. If they are not, have them checked right away. Otherwise, defensive driving is not an option.

- Being predictable helps: Having all your indicators in good working order is great, but they won’t help much if you can’t be predictable. Defensive driving is synonymous with being predictable – you do what you’re expected to do. If you’re signaling a left turn, then make a left turn. Don’t signal that you’re going left then suddenly turn right. And, by no means, keep signaling a left or right turn then go straight ahead for miles and miles. In defensive driving, one never makes a move that confuses other drivers on the road. Surprises are great, but never when you’re driving.

- Warn others as you stop or slow down: When making a full stop or slowing down for whatever reason, it’s a good defensive driving technique to let other drivers know of your intention. You can do this by tapping the brake pedal a couple of times so that your brake lights flash and clue in others behind you that you are slowing down or stopping. This is especially important if the driver behind you is driving fast and approaching quickly.

- Leave yourself room for error. An experienced driver maintains enough distance on all four sides of his car to allow him to safely react to the changes on the road

- Courtesy goes a long way in reducing the level of anxiety around you, thus reducing the odds of an accident. On the other hand attempts to teach fellow drivers a lesson or punish or offend them and in general behavior without regard to others significantly increase psychological tension around you. Other drivers become annoyed, and annoyance leads to impaired judgment, increasing the odds of you getting into an accident.

- Know where you want to go: The first rule of defensive driving is: know where you want to go. There’s nothing quite as dangerous as making a sudden turn or stop, which is something that drivers do when they are not sure about where they are headed. Ditto for driving slowly then suddenly zooming fast. If you’re confused about where you want to go, you’re probably confusing other people on the road as well. If you’re lost, park your car and regain your bearings. Check a map or street directory or maybe even ask someone for directions. The worst thing you can do is drive around aimlessly. That’s like looking for trouble with a capital T.

Leading Causes of Traffic Accidents

1. Speeding:

   a. Whether they are late for work, in a hurry to get home, or just impatient with the slow flow of traffic, most drivers exceed the speed limit at least some of the time. None of these reasons are a good excuse for speeding, though.

   By slowing down and obeying the speed limit, you can save lives.
2. Driving While Intoxicated:

   a. Even with a BAC as low as .01 percent (one drink), alcohol impairs judgment and makes drinkers feel less inhibited. Drinkers usually don't even recognize this loss of judgment, though, because the alcohol is simultaneously increasing their self-confidence. Alcohol then gradually affects drinkers' vision, coordination, speech, and hearing. Vision becomes blurry, and side vision narrows. Eye movements usually slow and there is a tendency to stare too long at one place. Physical responses continue to slow. These effects diminish a driver's ability to work through the IPDE process.

   i. Avoiding and Identifying Drunk Drivers: The basic way to minimize the likelihood of encountering drunk drivers is to avoid driving when bars are closing. That is when the most drunk-drivers are on the road, especially on weekends. If you see a car drifting around in or out of its lane, moving too slowly or too fast, tailgating, or driving erratically, it's quite possible that the driver is drunk. They are certainly not in control of their vehicle and may even be so drunk that they are falling asleep at the wheel. The best way to deal with them is to get out of their path. At the earliest opportunity, call the police or highway patrol and notify them of the vehicle's description, including license plate number, location, and the driver's behavior.

3. Road Rage:

   a. Road rage happens when one driver reacts angrily to another driver. Angry drivers may lash out by deliberately braking suddenly, pulling close to another car, or taking more violent steps such as coercing a driver to pull over to "settle" the dispute. Many drivers make a habit of driving with road rage.

Here are some suggestions to help you avoid provoking other drivers:

- Don't cut off other drivers: When you merge, make sure you have enough room and always signal before you merge.
- Don't drive slowly in the left (fast) lane: Avoid using the fast lane except for the brief time it takes to pass another driver. Driving slowly in the fast lane frustrates other drivers.
- Don't tailgate: Many drivers get angry when they are followed too closely. Remember to keep the appropriate following distance between your car and the car ahead of you.
• Don't signal gestures to other drivers: Keep your hands on the steering wheel. Making obscene gestures to other drivers may provoke them.
• Use your horn for emergencies only: Even a polite tap of your horn may be enough to provoke another driver.
• Avoid eye contact with an angry driver: To some people, eye contact is the same as a challenge. If someone is determined to act out his or her frustrations, even a friendly smile can be misinterpreted.
• Give an angry driver plenty of space: If you make a driving error (even accidentally), it is possible the other driver may try and pick a fight with you. Put as much distance between your vehicle and the other car as you can.

Physical Condition: Age, sight, hearing, and physical handicaps all can affect your driving performance. All drivers must evaluate their own situations and allow additional time for their inabilities to enable them to react to traffic situations.

Drivers with short-term or sudden illnesses are usually less attentive and more distracted because of their physical condition. The usual one-second reaction time may be increased to two or three seconds, and if the driver is taking medication as well, the entire driving process is affected. The total effect is greater than the sum of the individual effects. Combining drugs produces a reaction greater than the sum of the individual drugs involved. This is called the synergistic effect.

Fatigue can also have an impact on your driving ability. It can slow your reaction abilities and make you more irritable and uncoordinated. Often, fatigue occurs during long trips. It can result from a heavy meal, eyestrain, lack of sleep, or just boredom. If you find yourself feeling drowsy, inattentive, or if your vision is blurred, you may be suffering from fatigue. If so, you should take a break and continue your trip when you are more alert.

In addition, your reaction time will be reduced. Drivers who are too sleepy to drive properly cause about 200,000 accidents a year around the country. Many traffic fatalities are caused by the driver feeling sleepy.

According to the NHTSA, only four in every one hundred vehicles on the road is a large truck, which traveled only 8% of the total vehicle miles in 2004. In 2004, they accounted for 8% of all vehicles involved in fatal collisions and 12% of traffic fatalities. This high collision rate is caused in large part by fatigue.

The NHTSA recommends you follow these tips to avoid fatigue when taking long trips:
• Plan your trip well with reasonable daily itineraries.
• Rotate driving shifts, if more than one driver is available.
• Always get a good night’s sleep before you embark on a long trip.
• Avoid late-night driving—between midnight and 6 am is the riskiest time.
• Take a break every two hours to stretch and relax.
• Try to get some physical exercise during the day.
• Try to maintain a good diet (without excessive caffeine that might contribute to sleep loss at night and fatigue the next day).

Laws and procedures are designed to make driving safer. However, many drivers become more relaxed as they drive. As driving becomes second nature, drivers often pay too little attention to the driving task.

Your education as a driver does not end the day you receive your driver’s license. Rather, good drivers continue to learn more and more about safe driving throughout their years behind the wheel. It is easy to become complacent after many years of driving, but a know-it-all can be even more dangerous than an inexperienced driver if he doesn’t pay attention to new driving lessons taught every day on the road. By constantly paying attention to these lessons, you can learn how to avoid collisions and help make the roads safer.

No matter how experienced a driver is, new situations occur all the time, especially when driving in unfamiliar territory. Driving in urban areas can be extremely challenging to drivers from small towns, as different situations present themselves. Similarly, a driver experienced in big city traffic may not know how to handle many of the potential hazards found in rural areas.

Inexperienced drivers lacking sufficient knowledge regarding specific laws suffer in many ways. Some become frustrated, and others may end up making driving mistakes, such as going the wrong way on a one-way street, resulting in embarrassment, fines, injury, and sometimes death.

Drivers who lack sufficient knowledge of driving laws may not react in a manner anticipated by other drivers, thus increasing the chances of getting into a collision. You should know all of the driving laws so that you reduce your chances of colliding with other vehicles on the road.

Have You Been a Distracted Driver?

When driving, do you ever?

→ Tune the radio
→ Eat, drink, or smoke
→ Pick something up from the floor or between the seats
→ Read, write
→ Reach for the glove compartment
→ Talk on the cell phone

→ Clean the inside of the windshield
→ Argue with another passenger
→ Comb or brush your hair
→ Break up fights between your kids
→ Put on makeup
→ Put on contact lenses or use eye drops
→ Shave
File, clip, or polish your nails?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you are driving while distracted and are at risk of an accident. Drivers inadvertently sometimes focus their attention away from the roadway, thus putting themselves and their families/passengers in jeopardy.

How to Avoid Being Distracted:
→ Stay focused and pay attention!
→ Limit interaction with passengers.
→ Avoid talking while driving.
→ Avoid taking your eyes off the road.
→ Keep both hands on the wheel.

Avoid driver fatigue:
→ Stay focused on the road.
→ Don't daydream.
→ Don't drive if you are tired.
→ Share the driving responsibilities on long trips.

Don't drive when angry or upset:
→ Emotions can interfere with safe driving. Wait until you have cooled down or resolved problems to drive.
→ Avoid "gawking," or slowing down to look at a crash or other activity.
→ If you need to use your cell phone while driving:
→ Pull off the road and stop in a safe place before using your phone.

The odds of being involved in a crash or near crash were nearly three times as high when drowsy relative to when not drowsy (Odds Ratio = 2.9).

The odds of being involved in a crash or near crash were nearly three times as high when driving significantly faster than surrounding traffic relative to when driving at appropriate speeds (Odds Ratio = 2.9).

The odds of being involved in a crash or near crash were more than twice as high when driving aggressively than when not driving aggressively (Odds Ratio = 2.1).

The odds of being involved in a crash or near crash were nearly twice as high when looking away from the forward roadway for 2 seconds or longer than when attentive to the forward roadway (Odds Ratio = 1.9).

Driver Distractions - Don’t Be A Statistic - Distractions Are Everywhere

Driving is a skill that requires your full attention to safely control your vehicle and respond to events happening on the roads around you. Driving involves constant and complex coordination between
your mind and body. Events or things that prevent you from operating your car safely are distractions. There are three types of distractions and they are anything that takes your:

- eyes off the road (visual).
- mind off the road (cognitive).
- hands off the steering wheel (manual).

When you think about the actions you make in your vehicle, other than just driving, you can see that they often involve more than one type of distraction. For instance, if you change your radio station, you take a hand off the steering wheel to press a button, and take your eyes off the road to look at what button you want to press.

Driving Distractions Study

Driver distractions are the leading cause of most vehicle crashes and near-crashes. According to a study released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), 80% of crashes and 65% of near-crashes involve some form of driver distraction. The distraction occurred within three seconds before the vehicle crash!

According to the NHTSA and VTTI study, the principal actions that cause distracted driving and lead to vehicle crashes are:

- cell phone use.
- reaching for a moving object inside the vehicle.
- looking at an object or event outside of the vehicle.
- reading.
- applying makeup.

Drivers who engage more frequently in distracted driving are more likely to be involved in a vehicle crash or near-crash.

“Dial D” for Disaster

Cell phone use has become so popular these days that many times we don’t realize when, where, and how often we are utilizing our “cellular telephones.” Cell phone use while driving has increased so significantly within the last few years that at any typical daytime moment, as many as 10% of drivers are using either a hand-held or hands-free phone.

Studies have shown that driving performance is lowered and the level of distraction is higher for drivers who are heavily engaged in cell phone conversations. The use of a hands-free device does not lower distraction levels. The percentage of vehicle crashes and near-crashes attributed to dialing is nearly identical to the number associated with talking or listening.
Make and finish your cell phone calls before you start your vehicle and drive. If your phone rings while you are driving, let your voicemail pick up the call. If you must answer your phone, pull over to a safe location and park before using your cell phone.

New cell phone laws took effect July 1, 2008 in California. Drivers age 18 and over may use hands-free devices while driving. Drivers under the age of 18 may not use any type of hand-held or hands-free wireless phone while driving.

Are You Eating a Crash Diet?

If you are eating in your vehicle while driving, you are focusing on your food and not on your driving. You are not only chewing and swallowing; you are also opening packages, unwrapping and re-wrapping food, reaching, leaning, spilling, wiping, and cleaning yourself or your vehicle. These are quite a number of distractions for one driver on one trip. You are safer when you stop to eat or drink. Allow yourself plenty of time to stop, rest from driving, and enjoy your meal.

Are You Being Driven to Distraction?

What do children, friends, and pets all have in common? All can be a dangerous distraction to you while you are driving.

Teach your young children that driving is an important job and that you must concentrate when you are behind the wheel. Buckle up your children properly. Give them distractions—books, games, or other appropriate toys to occupy their time. If you need to attend to your children, pull over to a safe place. Don’t try to handle children while you are driving.

When you are driving with friends and relatives, establish some strategies to keep your passengers under control. A carload of friends can be very distracting with loud talking, quarrelling over music selections, or horseplay. Arguments and other disturbing conversations should be held in a safe, appropriate place, not while you are driving in your vehicle.

A loose pet in a moving vehicle can be very dangerous. Properly secure your pet in a pet carrier, portable kennel, or specially designed pet harness when you are driving. Never allow your pet to sit in your lap while you are driving your vehicle.

Turning Dials Can Turn Your Head

Making destination entries on an in-vehicle navigation system, radio surfing for a good song, or adjusting your vehicle’s climate controls are distracting activities that can put you in danger of a vehicle crash or near-crash. The availability of in-vehicle Internet and e-mail access from cell phones, blackberries, and other portable devices are added distractions that increase your risk of a crash if you engage in these activities while driving.

- Adjust vehicle’s controls (climate controls, mirrors, radio, seat, etc.) before you begin to drive.
- Check your e-mail, voicemail, and any other portable devices you have before you begin driving.
• Take advantage of normal stops to adjust controls.
• Ask your passenger to adjust the radio, climate control, navigation system, etc. for you.

Looks Can Kill...

Looking out your window at what you are passing while you are driving can be a distraction if you are concentrating on getting a good look at:

• an accident
• a vehicle pulled over by law enforcement
• construction work
• a billboard advertisement
• a scenic view
• street names and addresses

Always focus on your driving. It’s crucial that you remain alert while on the road to arrive at your destination safely.

Distractions and Young

The leading cause of death for 15-20 year olds are vehicle crashes. Vehicle crashes make up approximately one-third of all deaths for this age group. More crashes occur when passengers, usually other teens, are in the vehicle with a teen driver. Two out of three teens die as passengers in a vehicle driven by another teen.

These statistics are caused by a teenager’s immaturity, driving inexperience, overconfidence, and risk-taking behaviors. Before your teen takes to the road, explain to him/her the dangers of participating in distracting activities and driving. Many teens do not see the connection between the things that distract them and their age group’s high rate of vehicle crashes and death.

Give your teen strategies and rules to help them keep their passengers under control. No horseplay, inciting the driver to speed or engaging in any other type of dangerous activity while riding in a vehicle.

Instruct your teen to set up his/her in-vehicle radio, CD player, IPOD or any other in-vehicle music playing device before driving and to play the music at a listening level that is not distracting. Wearing headphones or earplugs is illegal in California regardless of the age of a driver.

Talk with your teen about how to deal with driving distractions. Discuss what could happen if he/she tries to answer a cell phone, send a text message, search for music, or spill a drink on themselves while they are driving. Explain the importance of driving safely and staying alive.

Other Deadly Distractions
In this age of multi-tasking, it is common to do more than one task at the same time. You already multi-task when you are driving; your mind and body are working simultaneously to drive your vehicle. You should not add another task on top of what you already need to do to drive safely. These tasks should never be done while you are driving:

- Reading a newspaper, a book, or a map.
- Personal grooming, such as hair grooming, shaving, or applying makeup.
- Smoking and dealing with lighting up, putting out cigarettes, or falling ashes.
- Working in your car: typing on a laptop, making business calls, and writing notes or reports.

Undistracted Driving

When you are driving, the condition of the roadway you are on and the behavior of other drivers can change abruptly, leaving you little or no time to react. When you are driving, follow these rules:

- Stay focused.
- Pay attention.
- Expect the unexpected.
- These tips can help you continue to drive and arrive at your destination safely:

  - Follow the advice in this brochure
  - Ensure all passengers are buckled-up properly.
  - Be well-rested and in the appropriate mindset to drive. Driving while you are upset or angry can be just as dangerous as driving when you are tired.
  - Help your teen identify and reduce distractions when he/she is driving.
  - Do not tailgate.
  - Allow sufficient time to reach your destination.
  - Ensure your vehicle is properly maintained.
  - Driver distractions reduce your awareness to your driving environment, your decision-making process and your driving performance. This results in crashes or near-crashes and corrective actions having to be taken by you and/or other drivers on the road.

Drive safe and stay alive. Keep your mind on your driving, keep your eyes on the road, and your hands on the wheel!
APPENDIX A: Risk Management Training Program Presentation

All IIPP Training Programs are available for viewing and/or printing at:
http://www.egusd.net/riskmanagement/IIPP.html
APPENDIX B: Risk Management Employee Informational Brochure

All Employee Information Brochures are available at:
http://www.egusd.net/riskmanagement/IIPP.html