



## What is a Defensive Driver?

Driving to avoid accidents means more than simply observing traffic regulations and being alert and skillful. A true defensive driver constantly practices the principles of defensive driving so they can defend themselves against the situations that cause accidents, which are often created by the other driver.

The defensive driver expects and makes allowances for the reckless, careless, or unexpected action of other drivers. The defensive driver does not expect other drivers always to obey traffic regulations, to look before pulling from the curb, to observe stop signs or to stop at red traffic signals. And so, when they do not do these things, the defensive driver is not surprised, not caught with their guard down. Because their guard is up, they avoid the accident, having anticipated, and made allowance for the careless act of another driver.

They drive skillfully to avoid hitting others, but in addition they put themselves in a position not to be hit by others, regardless of what others do wrong. In other words, they make themselves hard to hit.

They adjust their driving to meet all of the changing hazards of weather, roads, traffic, and other conditions. Fifty miles per hour may be safe on a dry, deserted road; 10 miles per hour may be too fast on the same road when it's wet and full of traffic.

Defensive drivers use the space-cushion driving techniques to get the two key things they need to safely drive any vehicle through ever-changing traffic conditions:

- Space for their vehicle.
- Visibility for the driver.

You can get the space you need for your vehicle and the visibility you need as the driver by using the five seeing habits:

- Aim high in steering.
- Get the big picture.
- Keep your eyes moving.
- Leave yourself an out.
- Make sure they see you.

Remember, driving defensively, as opposed to offensively (relying on the other person), will get you home SAFELY!