

Driver Letter

A MONTHLY MESSAGE FOR DRIVERS
FROM THE [LOSS CONTROL DEPARTMENT OF THE HARTFORD](#)

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What is Defensive Driving?

Dear Driver:

The term **Defensive Driving** is often used very loosely, but how many drivers really understand what it means and do you actually practice it when driving? **Defensive Driving** is driving to avoid *all* collisions; by not committing "mistakes or driving errors" ourselves; then looking out and compensating for the incorrect actions of others, and adverse weather, road and traffic conditions.

If you are involved in a collision it is usually an indication that you were **NOT** driving Defensively. **Defensive Driving** entails the continuous and consistent employment of your driving knowledge and foresight to the situation. You are not employing defensive driving principles in a dependable manner when you:

- Do not have an adequate space cushion when the vehicle in front suddenly stops – do not maintain an adequate 2-3 second space cushion between you and the vehicle in front of you
- Do not look both ways when entering an intersection to ensure traffic stopped or yielded
- Make the mistake of "assuming" the other driver will yield to you when making a maneuver; i.e. pulling from a stop sign, making a left turn, backing, etc.
- Assume it is safe to make a left turn when the opposing driver waves you on or allows you to turn left in front of them
- Do not first look left, right, & left again at an intersection when your light has just turned green
- Have your wheels all ready turned left when stopped to make a left turn
- Drive on or close to the center line, especially on a curve
- Turn left in the face of oncoming traffic – when your view is obstructed by a vehicle opposite of you also trying to make a left turn
- Do not come to a complete stop for a stop sign – do not stop first behind the stop sign then creep forward making sure the intersection is clear before proceeding
- Do not stay far enough back from the vehicle stopped in front of you. You should be able to see their rear tires touching the pavement – leave an adequate distance so you can maneuver your vehicle around it if necessary
- You back your vehicle without first getting out and check the clearances - All backing collisions are Preventable



- Exceed the posted speed limit or drive at a speed too fast for existing traffic and/or weather conditions
- Constantly drive in the fast lane (the left or passing lane) – A major cause of road rage
- Do not turn from the nearest lane into the nearest lane; you should turn from the left lane into the left most lane and from the right lane into the right most lane
- Do not keep your eyes constantly moving. You should shift your focus every two seconds and scan to the front, check your mirrors as well as the sides of your vehicle
- Do not realize a “Parked vehicle” (double parked or otherwise) may be a hazard - BUT never caused a collision. This requires you to maneuver safely around the parked vehicle even if it is parked illegally – an illegally parked vehicle is not an excuse for a collision
- Do not continuously observe pedestrian traffic next to or near your vehicle, especially at night or in poor weather – keep your eyes moving
- Do not **Slow Down** and cover your brake when you enter an intersection or identify a potential hazard

While these situations may not in themselves cause a collision, they can each contribute to the possibility of being involved in a preventable collision. By avoiding these poor driving habits or “mistakes” you reduce your chances of being involved in an accident; realizing that in almost any situation, where one driver drives Defensively, there will **NOT** be a collision. **Let that driver be you!**

Be a Dependable and Defensive Driver!!!

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