



## Road Rage and Aggressive Driving

What is it that makes some drivers so angry on the road? Sometimes there is a reasonable thing that prompts the anger, such as another car cutting dangerously close in front of a driver. Still, keeping your temper on the road is key to safe driving.

It might just be that kind of bad day. Or traffic might be stalled. There are many causes of road rage, but according to a Reuter's study, **84% of people surveyed said that someone else talking on a cell phone was most likely to incite anger on their part.**

Fifty percent of those surveyed were annoyed by drivers who cut across traffic without paying attention. Other causes of road rage include:

- Texting while driving
- Putting on makeup
- Driving too fast
- Tailgating
- Slamming on brakes
- Running red lights

### **Why Aggressive Driving Is Increasing**

- **Lack of responsible driving behavior** – On the road, the focus often is on individual rights and freedom, not on responsibility to other drivers we share the road with. Driving should be cooperative, not a competitive sport.
- **Reduced levels of enforcement** – The perceived risk of being apprehended for a traffic violation is directly related to the level of traffic enforcement. Unfortunately, many jurisdictions have cut back on traffic enforcement because of budget constraints.
- **More travel and congestion, especially in urban areas** – Over the last 30 years, the number of miles driven in the United States has increased by 38 percent, while the number of miles of available roads has increased by less than 1 percent. Some motorists find themselves responding to the frustrations of driving in high-density traffic areas by acting aggressively.

Road rage is different from aggressive driving in that it involves using a vehicle as a weapon with intent to do harm. It is a physical assault of a person or vehicle as a result of a traffic incident—this is a criminal offense where you can go to jail.

### **Reduce Your Own Aggressive Driving Tendencies**

- Keep your emotions in check. Don't take your frustrations out on other drivers.
- Plan ahead and allow enough time for delays.
- Focus on your own driving. Yelling, pounding on the steering wheel and honking your horn won't make traffic move any faster.

### **How to Avoid Danger:**

First, be a cautious, considerate driver. Avoid creating a situation that may provoke another individual.

- Don't tailgate or flash your lights at another driver.
- If you're in the left lane and someone wants to pass, move over and let the driver pass you.
- Use your horn sparingly.

Second, if you do encounter an angry driver, don't make matters worse by triggering a confrontation.

- Avoid eye contact.
- Steer clear and give angry drivers plenty of room.
- Don't make inappropriate hand or facial gestures.
- If you're concerned for your safety, call 911.

### **Defensive Driving Policy:**

The best offense to aggressive driving habits is solid defensive driving skills. Talk with your employees about the risks associated with aggressive driving and encourage them to adopt safe habits whenever they are behind the wheel.