



This Month's Topic: Defensive Driving

While every situation is different and will require its own specific course of action, there are basic defensive driving tips that should always be followed while behind the wheel.

Alisto Engineering Group has clear policies that promote safe driving, and ensures that all company vehicles are well maintained and in good condition.

What is Defensive Driving?

The standard Safe Practices for Motor Vehicle Operations, ANSI/ASSE Z15.1, defines defensive driving as "driving to save lives, time, and money, in spite of the conditions around you and the actions of others."

It is a set of driving skills that allows you to defend yourself against possible collisions caused by bad drivers, drunk drivers, and poor weather. If you look ahead and keep your eyes moving, you will spot potential hazards more easily.

If you discipline yourself to always follow basic traffic rules and regulations each time you get behind the wheel, you can't help but to be a very safe driver and you will greatly reduce the chances of an accident. The key is self-discipline. Anytime you violate traffic rules you are putting yourself and everyone else around you at risk, not to mention adding additional wear and tear to your vehicle.

Eliminate Driving Distractions

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety.

Distracted driving has become an increasingly large problem on our nation's roadways in the last few years as cell phones have become more common in our day-to-day lives.

Do your best to eliminate distractions:

- Never text and drive
- Turn off your phone when you get behind the wheel
- Don't text or call someone when you know they are likely to be driving
- Make a pact with your family, spouse, and caregivers never to use the phone with kids in the car.
- No eating or drinking while driving
- Don't program your GPS, MP3 player or other devices while driving
- Pull over and stop to read maps.
- No grooming
- No reading
- No watching videos
- Try not to get too involved with passengers
- If something falls to the floor, pull over before trying to reach it.

Speeding

Driving too fast makes it harder to react to dangerous situations, reduces a driver's ability to steer safely around curves or objects in the roadway, and increases the force of impact in a crash. In 2012, speeding was a contributing factor in 30 percent of all fatal crashes, and more than 10,000 lives were lost in speeding-related accidents crashes.

Alisto Engineering Safety Statistics

Motor Vehicle Accidents/ Total Miles Driven	Lost Work Days/ Total Work Days	Occupational Injuries and Illnesses
01/01/15–01/04/15	01/01/15–01/04/15	01/01/15–01/04/15
0/1,718 miles	0* day/ 1 day	0**

* From BC Environmental Insurance

** Incident Report

"We hear a lot about distracted driving and we usually just think of cellphone usage because if we get caught we will get a ticket. There is also eating, drinking, reading, putting on makeup, among other distractions. I would like to address that at Alisto we drive a lot of different vehicles from a small Ranger to a 1-ton dually utility truck not to mention the rentals. It is important to get familiar with the vehicle you are driving before hitting the road. Reading the manual on how to tune in your favorite radio station on a busy road or while doing 65 (mph) on the freeway is not a good idea. Same goes with (adjusting) lights, wipers, hazards and all the other 'fun' buttons."



Rob Whitaker

Construction and Field Services
Alisto Engineering Group, Inc.

Stop Aggressive Driving

Most of us know aggressive driving when we see it, but the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) defines aggressive driving as, "when individuals commit a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property".

The term aggressive driving covers a range of unsafe driver behaviors. State laws define what constitutes aggressive driving and stipulate the related fines and penalties. Often, a driver must demonstrate more than one action to be considered aggressive.

California has amended existing reckless driving laws to include actions similar to those defined as "aggressive" by other states, actions causing bodily injuries to people other than driver, and specifically cites drivers engaged in speed contests.

Aggressive Driving Behaviors

Lane blocking

Don't block the passing lane. Stay out of the far left lane and yield to the right for any vehicle that wants to overtake you.

Tailgating

Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you. Dozens of deadly traffic altercations began when one driver tailgated another.

Signal use

Don't switch lanes without first signaling your intention, and make sure you don't cut someone off when you move over. After you've made the maneuver, turn your signal off.

Gestures

You are taking a big risk if you raise a middle finger to another driver. Obscene gestures have gotten people shot, stabbed, or beaten.

Horn use

Don't blow your horn at the driver in front of you the second the light turns green. If a stressed-out motorist is on edge, the noise may set him off.

Parking

Do not take more than one parking space and do not park in a handicapped parking space if you are not handicapped. Don't allow your door to strike an adjacent parked vehicle. Always look before backing up.

Headlight use

Keep headlights on low beam, except where unlighted conditions require the use of high beams. Dim your lights for oncoming traffic; don't retaliate to oncoming high beams with your own in order to "teach them a lesson."

Blocking traffic

If you are pulling a trailer or driving a cumbersome vehicle that impedes traffic behind you, pull over when you have the opportunity so that motorists behind you can pass. Also, do not block the road while talking to a pedestrian on the sidewalk.

Eye Contact

If a hostile motorist tries to pick a fight, do not make eye contact. This can be seen as a challenging gesture and incite the other driver to violence. Instead, get out of the way but do not acknowledge the other driver. If a motorist pursues you, do not go home. Instead, drive to a police station, convenience store, or other location where you can get help.

When confronted with aggressive drivers

- **Get Out of the Way.** First and foremost make every attempt to get out of their way.
- **Put Your Pride Aside.** Do not challenge them by speeding up or attempting to hold-your-own in your travel lane.
- **Avoid Eye Contact.** Eye contact can sometimes enrage an aggressive driver.
- **Gestures.** Ignore gestures and refuse to return them.
- **Report Serious Aggressive Driving.** You or a passenger may call the police. But, if you use a cell phone, pull over to a safe location.

Distracted Driving by the Numbers

Talking on the cellphone is the **#1** source of driver inattention.

An estimated **1** in **4** car crashes involve cell phone use.

80% of vehicle crashes involve some sort of driver inattention.

Text messaging creates a crash risk **23** times worse than driving while not distracted.

\$159 Cost of a driving ticket for texting or talking on a cell phone

References

1. <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety>
2. http://ots.ca.gov/Media_and_Research/Campaigns/Distracted_Driving.asp
3. <http://www.drive-safely.net/distracted-driving.html>
4. <http://dmv.dc.gov/page/behaviors-aggressive-driving>
5. <https://cfo.asu.edu/ergonomics-wmsd?destination=node%2F2832>
6. <http://www.drive-safely.net/defensive-driving-tips.html>
7. <http://auto.howstuffworks.com/car-driving-safety/accidents-hazardous-conditions/10-safe-driving-tips.htm#page=9>
8. <http://dmv.dc.gov/page/behaviors-aggressive-driving>
9. <http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/facts-and-statistics.html>



Model: Mallory Souza