

Steer Clear of Bad Driving

by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS)

Everyday millions of drivers take to our nation's roadways. While we hope that they devote all of their attention to driving when behind the wheel, the truth is today's drivers are distracted by a variety of activities both inside and outside their vehicle increasing their chances of making a bad decision on the roadway. One of your best defenses against these distracted drivers and their inevitable mistakes is to expect their bad decisions and steer clear of them.

It is estimated that every two minutes the typical driver makes 400 observations, 40 decisions, and one mistake while driving. That is why it is important to never assume that other drivers will make the right decision. In fact, it is a good rule of thumb to expect the worst-case scenario and plan your movements knowing that the other driver will not slow down, yield, move out of your way, or let you merge.

Another important way you can steer clear of bad drivers is to constantly observe and scan your surroundings. By using your peripheral vision and your mirrors, you can pick up on signals that a driver might make a dangerous decision. Some indicators to be aware of are the speed of the vehicle and the angle of its wheels as they might suggest the driver's intentions. Also be aware of distracted drivers or drivers who are, eating or drinking, using cell phones, grooming, reading, or are otherwise not focused on their driving. The earlier you notice roadway hazards around you and the bad driving of others, the more time you allow yourself to react and reposition yourself safely.

While you can't control the driving of others, you can control your own. Drivers who learn to expect bad decisions from other drivers and steer clear of trouble can often avoid dangerous last minute maneuvers that end in a crash. How safe is YOUR driving?