

# SAFETY AWARENESS

Brief Topic Safety Refresher Training For Associates

2024

## It's Your Job to Drive Defensively

Considering the value of the cargo that you transport in your trailer, and your most precious cargo—yourself—driving defensively is arguably one of your most important responsibilities. Your life—and the lives of those that find themselves near you on the highway—depends on it. Let's take a look at the meaning of driving defensively and discuss techniques for staying safe.

### What is defensive driving?

Defensive driving means anticipating dangerous situations by taking into account the actions of others and the presence of adverse driving conditions. Simply stated, defensive driving means being completely ready for potential surprises on the road.

### What does defensive driving require?

Defensive driving requires the knowledge and strict observance of all traffic rules and regulations applicable to the area in which the vehicle is being operated. A successful defensive driver will never be involved in a preventable accident. The following requirements of the National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Program can be helpful in learning to drive with a defensive mentality. According to this program, defensive driving requires the following:

- A constant alertness for the illegal acts and driving errors of other drivers, and a willingness to make timely adjustments in your own driving so that these actions will not cause you to get into an accident
- An understanding and anticipation of any adjustments you may need to make in your driving for hazards presented by abnormal, unusual or changing conditions. Such conditions include the mechanical functioning of your vehicle, type of road surface, weather, light, amount of traffic, and your physical condition and state of mind
- A thorough knowledge of the rules of right of way and a willingness to yield the right of way to another driver whenever necessary to avoid an accident
- An attitude of confidence that you can drive without ever having a preventable accident

### Three Basic Steps to Driving Defensively

Strive to follow these three basic steps:

1. **See the hazard.** When driving, think about what is going to happen or what may happen as far ahead of encountering a situation as possible.
2. **Understand the defense.** Specific situations require specific ways of reacting. Become familiar with the unusual conditions that you may face and learn how to handle them.
3. **Act in time.** Once you've noted a hazard and understand the defense against it, act as soon as possible! Never take a "wait and see what happens" attitude when driving.

By remembering these three steps and keeping good driving techniques in mind, you will learn to tailor your own driving behavior to the unexpected actions of other drivers and pedestrians.