

Defensive Driving – Lane Control

Defensive driving is driving so as to prevent accidents in spite of the incorrect actions of others or adverse driving conditions, such as weather, traffic, lighting, vehicle or road condition, or the driver's physical or mental state. The defensive driver assumes that other drivers may make mistakes and is on guard in the event an error is made.

Your safety program should include defensive driver training about the proper way to maintain lane control. Lane use and lane changing accidents primarily result from following too closely or being inattentive to traffic conditions ahead or to the side. Accidents involving lane use and lane changing primarily involve sideswiping and rear-end collisions. The existence of blind spots around large vehicles is a major contributing factor. The following are management areas that should be addressed regarding defensive driving and tips to provide your drives to help them become defensive drivers.

Management Issues

	Yes	No
Have your drivers been trained regarding safe lane use and lane changing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know if your drivers are practicing safe procedures for lane use and lane changing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you periodically have qualified personnel ride with your drivers to assess their driving habits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do your drivers know that most lane use and lane changing accidents result from following too closely or being inattentive to traffic conditions ahead or to the side?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do drivers perform a pre-trip inspection to ensure that all vehicle lights are functioning properly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are drivers aware of the concept of a 'preventable accident'? A preventable accident is one in which the driver failed to exercise every reasonable precaution to prevent the accident. This is irrespective of the extent of property damage and/or personal injury, to whom it occurred or the location of the accident.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lane use and lane changing accidents primarily result from following too closely or being inattentive to traffic conditions ahead or to the side.

Driver Tips

To be a defensive driver in maintaining lane control, your drivers should:

- Maintain a safe following distance. Drivers need to try to ensure that if the driver in front of them slams on his/her brakes or makes an emergency maneuver, they can avoid a collision, stay in their lane, and not be hit by the vehicle behind them. Following distance needs to be increased if the driver behind is following too closely.
- Scan ahead of what is immediately in front of their vehicle.
- Flash their brake lights to alert drivers following them if they perceive trouble ahead.
- Thoroughly observe the lane they are entering to assure there are no vehicles in the blind spots.
- Give right-of-way whenever changing lanes.
- Always signal their intentions far in advance of any lane changing maneuver.
- Clean mirrors and check adjustment frequently.

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301 E. Fourth Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202 F13839-LP (12/12)

