
ACCESSING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE (ASK) SHEET: *15 CHARACTERISTICS THAT ARE FOUND IN BAD DRIVERS AND THEIR HABITS (1-5)*

As you look universally at driving habits and resulting accidents, there are a number of characteristics that show up often. Listed below are some of these characteristics for you to examine your own style and behavior of driving.

1. Using your cell phone while driving

Whether you are talking or texting, this is a critical distraction that can lead to damage, injury, or death. According to the last national study in 2019, 31% of all accidents had use of a cell phone as a contributing factor. When you use your cell phone your concentration is not 100% on driving. This can and does lead to accidents. NOTE: This includes hands-free cell phones. They still are a distraction. Learn to control distractions. It will make you a safer driver. Turn the cell phone off. Check it when you are stopped. Nothing is so important in those few minutes that is worth your life.

2. Speeding

People who speed are usually late or feel they own the road. Remember, the road is not yours. You share it with people like you (should be scary). Speed limits represent maximum speed allowed under perfect conditions. Remember, the speed limit was not designed to make you frustrated. It was designed to protect you from others and yourself. Big car or small, all need to function within the rules – you too! Speed kills. Don't let it get you.

3. Tailgating

Tailgating is maddening for both parties involved. The driver in front is annoyed that the person behind them won't stay off their bumper, and the driver in back is annoyed that he can't go any faster. Why create this tension? After all, tailgating can lead to car accidents AND it can lead to intentional vindictive actions, like brake checking. If you want to go faster, pass the car ahead of you in another lane if it is safe to do so, but keep a safe distance if it is not. Remember the two-second rule!

4. Not using turn signals

If you don't tell other people where you're going, how can you expect them to know? Changing lanes or turning without signaling throws others off, and it could put you in harm's way. When drivers slow down to turn without putting their blinker on, it can catch the cars behind them off guard, and the offending individual could get rear-ended.

5. Merging improperly and in an unsafe manner

How many times have you been on a freeway on ramp and found yourself behind someone who doesn't understand how to merge? They let car after car zoom past them, thinking they're being polite when really, they're holding up the flow of traffic.

By the same token, there are motorists who do not know how to be patient. They seem to think it's acceptable to race to the front of a line of cars getting on the freeway when they know that the lane merges. This is wrong too and should not be put into practice.

Provided by the ASA – Houston Chapter Safety & Health Committee and 

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