



ACCESSING SAFETY KNOWLEDGE (ASK) SHEET: *DEFENSIVE DRIVING PRINCIPLES*

- A. Avoid Distractions.** A distraction is anything that takes your attention off the process and awareness of driving.
1. Fellow passengers
 2. Radio, GPS, other items in vehicle
 3. Outside interesting visuals
 4. Your emotions
 5. Eating, drinking, grooming
 6. Reading, writing, etc.
- B. Always control your distractions.** The best way to avoid and control distractions is to eliminate as many as possible.
1. Before driving, turn off the cell phone. If it cannot reach you, it cannot distract.
 2. Set your radio before you start driving.
 3. Set the GPS before you start. Place it where viewing does not distract.
 4. Limit eating and drinking before you drive.
 5. If you must eat or drink, stay away from messy foods and carefully control the type of drinking cup.
 6. Keep both hands on the wheel. This is better control AND better focus.
- C. Resolve emotional conflicts before you drive.**
1. Don't get caught in the trap of re-arguing the argument while you drive. Your mind must be focused on the drive.
 2. Learn to still your mind from conflict before you are on the road.
 3. Anger leads to uncontrolled aggressive driving.
- D. Make sure your seat belt is used and properly in place for you and all passengers.**
1. It can save your life.
 2. It is the law.
 3. Without seat belt proper use, airbags are less effective.
 4. Seat belts are the #1 vehicle safety device.
- E. Control your cell phone. If it is not turned off, it must be controlled.**
1. If using it as a GPS, set it like GPS and put it in a stationary, visible place.
 2. Turn off the sound. Sound will cause you to react and is distracting.
 3. Let calls go to voice mail.
 4. Avoid using cell phone at stop signs and stop lights.
 5. If you must talk, pull over to the side of the road safely to talk.
- F. Other guidelines**
1. Always maintain safe driving distance from other vehicles. You need reaction time. Follow the 3-second rule.
 2. Know your vehicle's blind spots. Avoid their becoming a problem.
 3. Be careful at intersections. The possibility of problems increases.
 4. Yield. Your right of way is not a "right."
 5. Obey speed limit and other signs. They are not suggestions, they are the law.
 6. Use your turn signal. Let other drivers know your intentions.
 7. Know yourself! Avoid driving if tired, drowsy, or distracted.

Remember, your goal is the safe operation of your vehicle and to have no accident - plan on it!

Provided by the ASA - Houston Chapter Safety & Health Committee and **ADAMS**
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