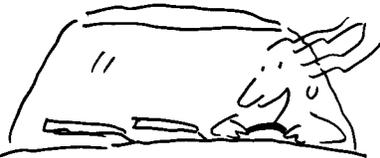


# Know Your Driving Personality

What type of driver are you? Many people reveal their personalities in the way they drive. Others take on an entirely different personality when driving.

Knowing what personality is at work when you hit the road helps make you a better driver. Which of the following driving styles most closely matches your driving personality?



## The Speeder

Some speeders just like to drive fast. Others drive that way because they're behind schedule. They'd like to drive more carefully, but they just don't have time. If you speed because of poor time management, get into the habit of giving yourself an extra 10 to 15 minutes to get to your destination. Don't forget to leave time for finding parking or an unfamiliar address.



## The Automatic Driver

These drivers are the picture of calm: eyes fixed on the road ahead. But in reality, their minds are a million miles away. Nothing ruffles them because they don't notice anything except the narrow focus of the road ahead. They're totally unprepared for the unexpected. If you find yourself driving "on automatic," make yourself look around and observe what's going on around you. Check conditions in every direction.



## The Aggressive Driver

These people are easy to spot. They're habitual tailgaters and they don't hesitate to cut in front of other drivers. Their message is clear: Get out of my way if you know what's good for you. Unconsciously, they may think of driving as a contest to

be won at all costs. If you find yourself slipping into this personality when you drive, take a minute to think of the other drivers on the road as real people with needs just as important as yours. By cooperating, we can all get where we're going safely and without unnecessary stress.



## The Distracted Driver

Distracted drivers spend their driving time planning their day, rehashing yesterday's meeting, talking on their cellular phones, applying makeup or worrying that they forgot something at the store. Distracted drivers may think of the daily commute as a time to shave, read the newspaper, eat breakfast or catch up on business. They're so busy with these activities, they may not always be alert to road and traffic conditions. Try setting aside distracting chores. You'll arrive at your destination more refreshed.



## The Timid Driver

Timid drivers often drive so slowly that they tie up traffic and cause other drivers to have to brake suddenly. Speed and traffic makes them nervous and causes them to make poor and unexpected driving decisions. If you're a timid driver, or you come across one of them on the road, learning defensive driving techniques might be the answer.

## The Sleepy Driver

Some people are lulled into a drowsy state by the sound of the car engine and the monotony of the road. It's difficult to be alert when you're sleepy. If you get



drowsy when driving, stop, get out of the car and take a breath of fresh air. Take a coffee break or stop for a nap on long trips. Stopping to rest won't delay your trip nearly as long as falling asleep at the wheel will.



## The Indecisive Driver

Should I change lanes? Do I want to turn here? Should I speed up? Slow down? Indecisive drivers never quite seem to know what they're going to do next. Unfortunately, neither do the other drivers around them. If you're indecisive, try mapping out your trip in advance and deciding what you're going to do before you get in the car. Pull over if you get confused. Signal your intentions to other drivers by using your turn signals. Learning defensive driving techniques can also help you make better driving decisions.



## The Good Driver

The good driver tries to be aware of negative driving personality traits and to balance them with extra caution and common sense. Though good drivers often would prefer to be somewhere else other than on the road, they maintain their focus in the present, pay attention to what's going on around them and practice courteous, defensive driving.

# Keep Your Distance

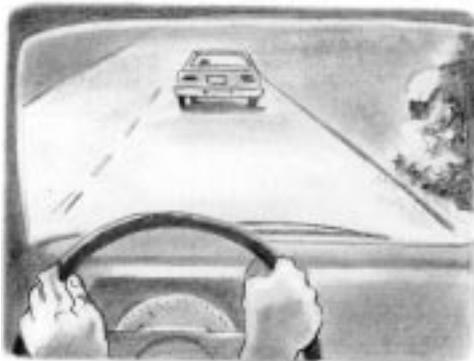
If the car in front of you stops suddenly, you need to be far enough behind it so you can stop in time to avoid a collision. But how far is that? Your safe following distance depends on how fast you're going and what the road conditions are. The two-second rule is a convenient way to figure out your safe following distance at various speeds without having to do calculations.

## What Is the Two-Second Rule?

According to the two-second rule, your following distance should be at least two seconds travel time behind the vehicle in front of you. To measure your following distance, choose a landmark such as a telephone pole or a tree that the



vehicle in front of you has not yet passed. When the vehicle's rear bumper passes that landmark, start counting seconds ("one thousand and one, one thousand and two"). Your front bumper should not reach the landmark before you count for two seconds. If it does, you're following too closely.



## The Two-Second-Plus Rule

Two seconds is the minimum following distance you should maintain. It applies to daytime driving in good weather conditions and at speeds less than 40 mph. Use the two-second-plus rule when traveling at higher speeds, when visibility is low or when weather or road conditions are unfavorable.

Under the two-second-plus rule, you should maintain a following distance of two seconds, plus additional seconds for each additional driving condition.

<i><b>If...</b></i>	<i><b>Add...</b></i>
you're traveling at more than 40 mph	<b>two seconds</b>
you're driving at night	<b>one second</b>
the vehicle in front of you is a motorcycle	<b>one second</b>
there's fog or poor visibility	<b>one second</b>
the pavement is wet	<b>one second</b>
you're being tailgated	<b>two seconds</b>
you're being tailgated by a tractor-trailer or bus	<b>four seconds</b>
you're towing a trailer	<b>two seconds</b>

If several of these conditions apply, add up the extra seconds for all of them. For example, if you're driving behind a motorcycle in the fog, that's two additional seconds you'll add to the two-second rule, for a total of four seconds following distance.

# Surviving the Storm: Tips for Driving in Bad Weather

Prepare for driving in bad weather before it happens—your life may depend on it. If you can, avoid driving in bad weather and wait until the roads are safe. If you must drive, use the following tips to help you prepare.

## PREPARE YOUR VEHICLE

- 🚗 Check fluid levels: brakes, battery, anti-freeze, window washer, oil and transmission.
- 🚗 Make sure your heater and defroster are in good working order and doors and windows are sealed properly.
- 🚗 Replace your windshield wiper blades.
- 🚗 Inspect your tires for tread wear, punctures or embedded debris such as nails.
- 🚗 Carry emergency supplies in your vehicle: flashlight, flares, booster cables, ice/snow scraper, first aid kit, shovel, sand, salt, snow chains, blanket and water.



## BAD WEATHER DRIVING TIPS

- 🚗 Slow down: Give yourself more time to arrive at your destination.
- 🚗 Be extra cautious when driving during the first rain after a dry spell. Oil and grease come to the road's surface, making it very slippery when wet.
- 🚗 When braking in bad weather conditions, allow yourself three times as much distance as normal to reach a full stop and avoid skidding.
- 🚗 Use low gears on slick surfaces, especially on hills and around curves.
- 🚗 If your car skids, don't brake, unless you have an anti-lock braking system (ABS). Take your foot off the gas and gently turn your car in the direction you want it to go.
- 🚗 Keep your headlights on during bad weather even if you can see; they help other motorists see you.
- 🚗 Avoid using your high beams in fog.
- 🚗 Clean your windshield and headlights often.
- 🚗 If weather conditions worsen, pull over before you get stranded.
- 🚗 If you get stuck in snow, avoid spinning your wheels—you'll only dig in deeper. Instead, shovel snow away from the wheel paths and place salt or sand around the drive wheel to improve traction.
- 🚗 Always be aware of the other vehicles around you and be ready to react.

# Prevent Collisions: Drive Defensively

A preventable collision, according to the National Safety Council, is “a collision in which the driver failed to do everything reasonable to avoid it.” The National Safety Council advises drivers to follow three simple rules for preventing collisions.

## 1. Recognize the hazard.

Scan the road ahead—to the next intersection in cities, or to the next hill or curve on the highway. Check the traffic to your side and behind you by looking in the rearview and side mirrors every five seconds.

Recognizing a hazard in advance gives you time to avoid it.

## 2. Understand defensive driving techniques.

Once you recognize a possible hazard, use your knowledge of defensive driving principles to choose the best way to avoid a collision in each situation.

## 3. Act correctly and in time.

After you’ve chosen the best defense against the hazard, take correct action in time to avoid a collision. This is where your alertness and driving skills pay off.

### Driving Defensively

The National Safety Council defines defensive driving as “driving to save lives, time and money in spite of the conditions around you and the actions of others.”

#### **Defensive driving saves lives.**

Drivers can learn the necessary skills to avoid collisions.

Approximately two-thirds of all collisions are considered to have been preventable. By driving defensively, collisions and deaths can be prevented.

#### **Defensive driving saves time.**

Avoiding collisions saves you time lost due to injury and car damage.

#### **Defensive driving saves money.**

You’ll save money that could be lost due to injury, missed work and car or other property damage.



### Be a Safe Driver

-  Be aware of the five characteristics of defensive driving: knowledge, foresight, alertness, judgment and skill.
-  Check the road for hazards and learn how to react to them.
-  Keep a safe distance between you and the next driver.
-  Use the proper signals.
-  Be alert and ready to react.
-  Obey speed limits, traffic rules and signs.
-  Give yourself plenty of time to get to your destination.
-  Be patient and courteous to other motorists.
-  Never tailgate.
-  Never drive while intoxicated.
-  Never drive when sleepy, ill or angry.
-  Adjust your driving to the road conditions.

# Take It Easy Behind the Wheel

Aggressive behavior can be a prescription for disaster when you're behind the wheel. Take this quiz to find out if you're an aggressive driver.

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## YES NO

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b><i>Do you try to get where you're going in the shortest possible time?</i></b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b><i>Do you fight the traffic, getting annoyed when other drivers move too slowly or block your way?</i></b>                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b><i>Do you often speed up at yellow lights?</i></b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b><i>Do you try to maximize your use of time by solving work problems, eating, reading or talking on the phone while driving?</i></b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b><i>Do you cut people off at intersections and exits?</i></b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b><i>Do people ever tell you that you seem upset when driving?</i></b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b><i>Do you arrive at your destination feeling keyed up, tense or drained?</i></b>  |

If you answered yes to any of these questions, maybe it's time for an attitude check. Behaviors like these are dangerous to you and to other drivers around you.

## Modify Your Driving Attitude

It would be nice if you could just skip driving altogether. But in addition to driving to and from work and running errands, you may also have to drive while on the job. Try these approaches to make driving easier and safer:

- Give yourself permission to just drive. In the long run, you'll be happier and more productive if you just relax.
- Listen to relaxing music instead of the daily disaster news.
- Make a conscious effort to avoid tailgating, lane changes, making gestures or insulting other drivers.
- Settle down by taking several slow, deep breaths.
- Remember that you only have control of your own behavior, not the behavior of others.
- Give yourself a little extra time to get where you're going, so you'll have one less reason to be aggressive on the road.

