

Driver Safety Letter

presented by



No Room for Aggression Behind the Wheel

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Aggressive driving — such as tailgating and erratic lane changing — is a factor in the majority of fatal crashes. It also can lead to road rage incidents. A close call arising from another driver's aggressive actions can be stressful and infuriating. But it's important that fleet drivers remain calm and don't respond in a way that will provoke a one-on-one confrontation or escalate the situation into a road rage incident.

Keep your hands on the steering wheel and avoid making any gestures, even shaking your head. Never give an obscene gesture or shout an insult. According to AAA Foundation, almost nothing makes another driver angrier than an obscene gesture. Remember, the other driver has already acted aggressively. You don't want to agitate him or her further.

Aggressive driving is defined by AAA as reckless performance behind the wheel, such as:

- Speeding in heavy traffic
- Tailgating
- Cutting in front of another driver and then slowing down
- Running red lights
- Weaving in and out of traffic
- Changing lanes without signaling
- Blocking cars attempting to pass or change lanes
- Using headlights or brakes to "punish" other drivers.

Road rage is malicious behavior directed at specific drivers, which may escalate to violence. Examples include:

- Cursing and rude or obscene gestures
- Throwing objects
- Ramming
- Sideswiping
- Forcing a driver off the road
- Brandishing or discharging firearms.

Here are some tips, again from AAA, on how to avoid becoming a road rage victim:

- Don't give other drivers a reason to feel offended. When you merge, make sure you have plenty of room and use your turn signal to show your intentions before making a move. If you're in the left lane and someone wants to pass, move over and let the vehicle by. Don't tailgate – allow at least a three-second space between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead.
- Don't let an aggressive driver tempt you to retaliate. Keep your cool and continue your trip.
- Give angry drivers lots of room. If the other driver tries to pick a fight, put as much distance between your vehicle and the other vehicle as possible. Don't, under any circumstances, pull off to the side of the road and try to settle things in a physical confrontation.
- Avoid eye contact if another driver is acting angry with you.
- If you believe another driver is following you or is trying to start a fight, get help. Don't get out of your vehicle, and don't go home. Contact the police or drive to a place where there are people around, such as a police station, convenience store, shopping center or even a hospital. Use your horn to get someone's attention. This will usually discourage an aggressor.

The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and [CPC Logistics, Inc.](#), is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at tommoore@nptc.org or (703)838-8898.