

Safety Matters - Defensive Driving Techniques

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DEFENSIVE DRIVING

Defensive driving practices apply to all driving situations. In addition to normal work related travel on public roads, Garden employees drive a wide variety of equipment; from scooters to golf carts to trams, trolleys and buses; not to mention mowers, gators, tractors and other heavy equipment within the Garden.

The National Safety Council developed defensive driving training in response to the significant number of occupational deaths due to vehicle collisions. Defensive driving can prevent accidents and injuries which is why it is important for your garden to conduct proper training.

<https://www.nsc.org/safety-training/defensive-driving>

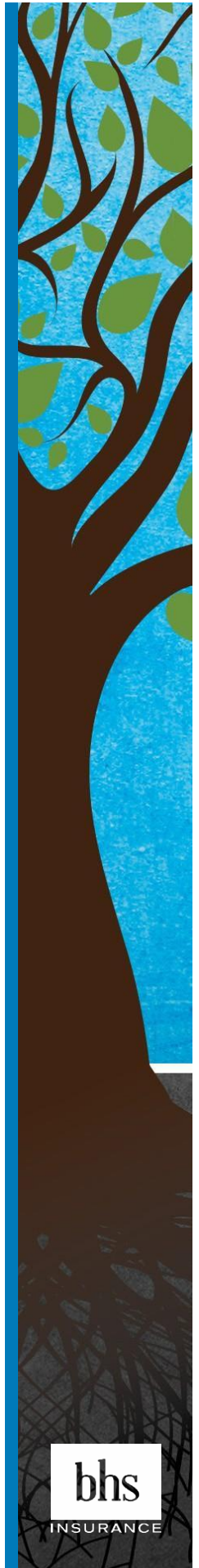
DEFENSIVE DRIVING DEFINED

Defensive driving means anticipating dangerous situations by taking into account the actions of others and/or the presence of adverse driving conditions.

WHAT DOES DEFENSIVE DRIVING REQUIRE?

Defensive driving requires the knowledge and observance of traffic rules and regulations applicable to the area in which the vehicle is being operated. The following requirements of the National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Program will help drivers adapt a more defensive mentality. According to the program, defensive driving requires:

- A constant alertness for the illegal acts and driving errors of other drivers, and a willingness to make timely adjustments in your own driving so that these actions will not cause an accident.
- An understanding and anticipation of adjustments you may need to make while driving due to hazards presented by unusual or changing conditions. Such conditions include the mechanical functioning of your vehicle, type of road surface, weather, light, amount of traffic, and your physical condition and state of mind
- A thorough knowledge of the rules of right of way and a willingness to yield the right of way to another driver whenever necessary to avoid an accident.



- An attitude of confidence that you can drive without having a preventable accident.

THREE BASIC STEPS TO DRIVING DEFENSIVELY

Strive to follow these three basic steps:

1. See the hazard. When driving anticipate what may happen as far ahead of encountering a situation as possible.
2. Understand the defense. Specific situations require specific ways of reacting. Become familiar with the unusual conditions that you may face and learn how to handle them.
3. Act in time. Once you've noted a hazard and understand the defense against it, act as soon as possible.

By embracing these steps and avoiding driving distractions, you will learn to tailor your driving behavior to the unexpected and be ready to adapt to the unpredictable conditions you may encounter. Work to strengthen your physical ability to focus and concentrate whenever you drive.

HELPING YOUR INSTITUTION

When hiring prospective drivers develop consistent requirements for those who will have driving responsibility in terms of the equipment they will drive, as well as their experience and driving history. You will want to review their Motor Vehicle Record prior to making an employment offer and at regular intervals as deemed appropriate thereafter.

Provide and document training for all of the various equipment that the employee will need to operate. Review the manufacturer's manual specific to each piece of equipment to comply with the equipment's unique features.

Have a formal driver safety policy in place to include these items and communicate the expectation and responsibility with employees.

Encourage defensive driving techniques over the road and onsite to avoid injury, property damage, liability risks and legal expenses associated with even the most minor vehicle accidents.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please call a member of the BHS Insurance Public Garden team at (800) 350-7676.

