



Life in the Fast Lane – Aggressive Driving



While most people recognize aggressive driving by others, they fail to recognize when they, themselves, become aggressive drivers.

No man can for any considerable period can wear one face to himself and another to the multitude without finally getting bewildered as to which may be true.

-Nathaniel Hawthorne

- Aggressive driving is one of the biggest threats we face while driving.
- Aggressive driving is defined as a combination of unsafe and unlawful driving actions, which demonstrate a conscious and willful disregard for safety.
- Aggressive driving includes such offenses as tailgating, unsafe lane changes, speeding, running red lights and stop signs, following too closely, improper passing and failing to yield the right of way.

Although it's not certain what makes someone an aggressive driver, here are some of the things we know about them:

- Aggressive drivers climb into an automobile and take out their frustrations on anybody at any time.
- For them, frustration levels are high, and level of concern for fellow motorists is low.
- They run stop signs and red lights, speed, tailgate, weave in and out of traffic, pass on the left, make unsafe lane changes, make hand and facial gestures, yell, honk horns, and flash their lights.



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If you are confronted by an aggressive driver, or witness aggressive driving behavior, follow these guidelines:

- Make every attempt to safely move out of the aggressive driver's way.
- Do not challenge an aggressive driver by speeding up or attempting to "hold your own" in the travel lane.
- Always wear your seat belt -- not only will it hold you in your seat and behind the wheel in case you need to make an abrupt driving maneuver, but it will also protect you in a crash.
- Avoid eye contact with the aggressive driver.
- Ignore gestures, and refuse to return them.
- Park in one space. And inside the lines too. You run the risk of provoking an angry driver if you take up multiple spots.
- Don't stop in the middle of the road. If you see a friend walking or driving, safely pull over to the side to talk. Don't make people wait behind you.
- Allow cars to pass. It's not a race. If other drivers want to pass you, let them.
- Leave early. You're busy, but leave yourself plenty of time to make the trip so you don't have to rush. Ten or fifteen extra minutes can make a big difference.
- Take a deep breath. If you feel yourself getting flustered, take some deep breaths and repeat. You may be surprised how much it helps.



Forget the idea of “winning” on the road. Driving is not a race; it should not be a contest to see who finishes first. Leave plenty of time for a trip so that if traffic or another delay occurs, you can keep your cool. Think of the roadway as a conveyor belt – everyone will get to their destination eventually, so there is no need to speed or act impolite to save a few minutes. Put yourself in the other driver’s shoes. Have you ever made a mistake on the road, been lost, or unsure of your turn-off point? Instead of being angry at another driver making the same mistakes, give them the benefit of the doubt. When you make mistakes, acknowledge them and give the drivers around you a friendly nod or wave. Polite behavior makes driving safer.

