

# Center Safety Office Newsletter

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OO-ALC Safety Office (801) 777-3333

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## Advice for Motorists How to Avoid Road Rage

Motorists who might respond to provocation from an aggressive driver should think about the reality of the threat:

There are thousands of mentally and emotionally disturbed individuals on the highway. Charged with anger, fear, and personal frustration, and often impaired by alcohol or other drugs, motorists in all 50 states have murdered and maimed other motorists for seemingly trivial reasons. Explanations such as "He stole my parking space," "She kept honking her horn," "He wouldn't let me pass," and "She gave me the finger" abound in published reports. Motorists would be well-advised to keep their cool in traffic, to be patient and courteous to other drivers, and to correct unsafe driving habits that are likely to endanger, infuriate, or antagonize other motorists. Be aware of the behaviors that have resulted in violence in the past:

**1. Lane blocking.** Don't block the passing lane. Stay out of the far left lane and yield to the right for any vehicle that wants to overtake you. If someone demands to pass, allow them to do so.

**2. Tailgating.** Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you. Dozens of deadly traffic altercations began when one driver tailgated another.

**3. Signal use.** Don't switch lanes without first signaling your intention, and make sure you don't cut someone off when you move over. After you've made the maneuver, turn your signal off.

**4. Gestures.** You are playing Russian roulette if you raise a middle finger to another driver. Obscene gestures have gotten people shot, stabbed, or beaten in every state.

**5. Horn use.** Use your horn sparingly. If you must get someone's attention in a non-emergency situation, tap your horn lightly. Think twice before using your horn to say "hello" to a passing pedestrian; the driver in front of you may think you are honking at him. Don't blow your horn at the driver in front of you the second the light turns green. If a stressed-out motorist is on edge, the noise may set him off. Scores of shootings began with a driver honking the horn.

### Special Interest Articles:

- Advice for Motorists - Road Rage.
- How To Avoid Becoming A Victim
- Road Rage Quiz
- Accident Cross-Tell - Summer



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- 6. Failure to turn.** In most states right-hand turns are allowed after a stop at a red light. Avoid the right-hand lane if you are not turning right.
- 7. Parking.** Do not take more than one parking space and do not park in a handicapped parking space if you are not handicapped. Don't allow your door to strike an adjacent parked vehicle. When parallel parking, do not tap the other vehicles with your own. Look before backing up.
- 8. Headlight use.** Keep headlights on low beam, except where unlighted conditions require the use of high beams. Dim your lights for oncoming traffic; don't retaliate to oncoming high beams with your own in order to "teach them a lesson." Don't approach a vehicle from the rear with high beams and dim your lights as soon as a passing vehicle is alongside.
- 9. Merging.** When traffic permits, move out of the right-hand acceleration lane of a freeway to allow vehicles to enter from the on-ramps.
- 10. Blocking traffic.** If you are pulling a trailer or driving a cumbersome vehicle that impedes traffic behind you, pull over when you have the opportunity so that motorists behind you can pass. Also, do not block the road while talking to a pedestrian on the sidewalk. Dozens of shootings suggest that this behavior irritates a lot of people.
- 11. Car phones.** Don't let the car phone become a distraction -- keep your eyes and attention on the road. Car phones can be great for security but bad for safety. In addition, car phone users are widely perceived as being poor drivers and as constituting a traffic hazard. The data clearly show that aggressive drivers hate fender-benders with motorists who were talking on the telephone.
- 12. Alarms.** If you have an antitheft alarm on your vehicle, be sure you know how to turn it off. When buying an alarm, select one that turns off after a short period of time.
- 13. Displays.** Confederate flags on pickup trucks are not a good idea. Refrain from showing any type of bumper sticker or slogan that could be offensive; this might include an "I'M RICH" license plate.
- 14. Eye Contact.** If a hostile motorist tries to pick a fight, do not make eye contact. This can be seen as a challenging gesture and incite the other driver to violence. Instead, get out of the way but do not acknowledge the other driver. If a motorist pursues you, do not go home. Instead, drive to a police station, convenience store, or other location where you can get help and there will be witnesses.



## How to Avoid Becoming a Victim of Road Rage

Whether you are getting angry at other drivers or if another driver is visibly upset with you, there are things you can do to avoid major confrontations. If you are susceptible to road rage, the key is to discharge your emotion in a healthy way. If you are the target of another driver's rage, do everything possible to get away from the other driver safely. Avoid eye contact and get out of their way. By carefully following the following tips you can help avoid road rage

1. If you are being hassled by another driver, try not to react. Avoid making eye contact, as this is often seen as confrontational. Don't be tempted to accelerate, brake, or swerve suddenly; again, this may be seen as confrontational and increases your chances of losing control of your vehicle.

2. If a driver continues to hassle you or you think you are being followed, drive on to the nearest police station or busy place to get help.

3. In town, lock the car doors and keep the windows and sunroof only partly open.

4. When stopped in traffic, leave enough space to pull out from behind the car you are following.

5. If someone tries to get into your car, attract attention by sounding your horn or a personal alarm.

6. Do not be tempted to start a fight and do not be tempted to carry any sort of weapon. It may only provoke a potential assailant and could end up in his or her hands.

## Road Rage Quiz

### Are you guilty of aggressive driving?

You might be surprised. Answer the following questions to determine if your driving habits could contribute to road rage incidents.

Have you tailgated or followed close behind another driver?

Have you "gestured" toward another driver in anger?

Do you ever lean on your horn, even when you know it won't help?

Have you ever changed lanes quickly to get around slower drivers?

Do you ever yell at other drivers?

Do you drive without fastening your seat belt?

Believe it or not, if you answered yes to **any** of these questions, you could be labeled an aggressive driver and fall victim to road rage. However, by following the safety tips listed in this newsletter, you may be able to avoid road rage.

## Accident Cross-Tell Summer

Supervisors, please review with your employees the following accident scenarios to see if the lessons learned apply to your work area.

### Fatality

A TSgt was having a good time at a social gathering. Social drinking was taking place. Throughout the evening the drinking elevated alcohol blood levels to exceed state law thresholds for drunk driving. The TSgt got on his motorcycle and down the road made a left-hand turn into a truck. His injuries were serious, he died some time later.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Alcohol impaired driving.
- When drinking, especially over a period of time, people often don't realize the extent of their impairment.
- If you know you are going to be drinking, make prior arrangements to either stay or arrange for a ride.
- Pay attention to how much your friends are drinking. You do not want your friends to be on a bike, knowing they have had too much to drink
- Never assume it will not happen to me, or my friends.

### Fatality

An airman goes on a hike with his friend. He makes a spur of the moment decision to climb the face of a moist rock type of cliff. Twenty feet into the climb he falls to the canyon floor. The fall terminated his life.

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### **Lessons Learned:**

- Spur of the moment decisions can get you into trouble. Do a brief sanity check on the decision you have made. Do personal risk management in your head.
- No climbing training or equipment.
- Did not understand terrain, local conditions, hazards present.
- Perhaps friends should offer a sanity check.
- Overestimated abilities in youth, no fear.

### **Fatality**

An airman gets on a bullet bike, is impressed by the awesome pickup/speed. He is not an experienced rider. On a road west of Hill AFB he runs a red light at 50+ mph. He slams head first into the front fender of a car that is making a left turn at the light. He is pronounced dead at the scene.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Inexperienced rider on an unfamiliar bike
- No fear
- Did not think about consequences of riding through a red light at 50 mph on a motorcycle
- Obey the law

### **Broken Bones**

An airman with minimal ATV riding experience pushes the threshold of his abilities. He is going too fast for the trail and miscalculates a jump. The ATV bounces him off, in front of the ATV and runs over him. He is lucky and escapes with only broken bones and bruises.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Inexperienced rider on an unfamiliar ATV
- No fear
- Did not think about consequences of riding too fast on an unknown trail.

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See us at:

[www.hill.af.mil/safety](http://www.hill.af.mil/safety)

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### ***About Our Organization...***

***Our mission is to implement the OO-ALC Commander's Flight, Ground, System and Weapons safety programs ensuring the OO-ALC mission is accomplished in a safe and efficient manner.***

