



## Road Rage and Aggressive Driving

Driving is a task most people do every day and for many it is also a job responsibility. Below are definitions, statistics and examples of road rage and aggressive driving along with ways to avoid being involved in a road rage incident.

The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA)\* defines road rage as "the operation of a motor vehicle in a manner that endangers or is likely to endanger persons or property." Examples include: speeding or driving too fast for conditions, improper lane changing, tailgating and improper passing.

### **Difference between Road Rage and Aggressive Driving**

NHTSA makes a clear distinction between the two. Road rage is a criminal charge and aggressive driving is a traffic offense.

### **Road Rage Statistics\***

Statistics, compiled from the NHTSA and the Auto Vantage auto club, show aggressive driving and road rage are causing serious problems on our roads.

- 2% of drivers admit to trying to run an aggressor off the road.
- 37% of aggressive driving incidents involve a firearm.
- 66% of traffic fatalities are caused by aggressive driving.
- Half of drivers who are on the receiving end of an aggressive behavior such as horn honking, a rude gesture, or tailgating admit to responding with aggressive behavior.
- Males under the age of 19 are the most likely to exhibit road rage.
- Over a seven year period, 218 murders and 12,610 injuries were attributed to road rage.

### **Tips to Avoid Being Road Rage Victim (NHTSA recommendations)**

- Avoid eye contact. Eye contact can sometimes enrage an aggressive driver.
- If an aggressive driver gets in an accident, stop at a safe distance from the scene, wait for police, and report the driving behavior that you witnessed.
- If you're pursued by an angry motorist, never go home. Instead, drive to a police station or another safe and public place where you can get help.
- Ignore obscene gestures from other drivers, and never respond in kind. According to the AAA Foundation, "Obscene gestures have gotten people shot, stabbed, or beaten in every state."
- Lock your car doors and keep the windows and sunroof only partially open.
- Make every attempt to get out of the way of an aggressive driver.
- Put your pride in the back seat. Do not challenge drivers by speeding up or trying to prevent them from getting in your lane.
- Realize that you can't control another driver's behavior, but you can control your own. When another driver cuts you off, how you react will determine what happens next. If you are able to back off, take a deep breath and remain calm to defuse a potentially violent situation.
- Report aggressive drivers to the police or highway patrol.
- Use your horn sparingly. Stressed-out motorists are often sent over the edge by a supposedly rude honk.

- Wear your seat belt.
- Venting frustration is normal and healthy, so long as your behavior is appropriate.

### **Know Your Driving Style**

Are you an aggressive driver? Analyze your driving style and whether you are susceptible to road rage then consider changing your own driving habits. Always remember you are sharing the road with other motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Aggressive drivers routinely:

- Tailgate
- Use their horn
- Flash their headlights
- Change lanes quickly and often
- Gesture to other drivers
- Talk on their cell phone

\* Sources: [www.nhtsa.gov/](http://www.nhtsa.gov/) and [www.safemotorist.com](http://www.safemotorist.com)