



Collision Countermeasures

A Counseling Guide for
Fleet Managers
and Driver Supervisors

Prepared for Clients of
DriverCheck, Inc.

By DriverCheck, Inc.

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Counseling Tips

The goal of driver counseling is safety enhancement—to change negative driving performance, attitudes, or behavior before they result in a collision that could cost lives and a lot of money.

This goal is best accomplished when the supervisor and the driver discuss Observation Reports in a non-threatening, unemotional setting soon after they are received. This usually means in private when both persons involved are in a calm, rational mood.

The goal of driver counseling is not to punish or threaten. It's a fact: most people want to do a good job. They don't respond well to threats or lectures. They need coaching and an understanding of what the company expects as far as safety is concerned. With this in mind, consider using the following steps in driver counseling.

Step One: Ask for a Private Meeting

Ask the driver to stop by to discuss an Observation Report that you received. Make sure the discussion is in private, and don't let other employees know that a counseling session is about to take place.

Example: *"Jim, would you stop by for a few minutes? I've got an Observation Report I'd like to discuss with you."*

Step Two: State the Goal

Clearly state the goal of the meeting. Explain to the driver that you received an Observation Report and that you would like to discuss it. Take a non-judgmental, non-accusatory approach. You are not pronouncing the driver guilty of anything. You just want feedback on an observation made by a motorist.

Example: *"Jim. Thanks for stopping by. I received this Observation Report from a motorist, and I want to get your perspective on what happened."*

Step Three: Recall the Incident

Conceal the caller's identity, then allow the driver to read the Observation Report. Ask the driver to recall the incident and to give his or her side of the story. Remember that the discussion can be uncomfortable for the driver and the supervisor. That's why it is essential to avoid using emotional

or inflammatory language. Don't accuse. Just talk and—more important—listen.

If this is the driver's first Observation Report, give him or her the benefit of the doubt. You want the driver to know that all Observation Reports are taken seriously and that they will be discussed whenever they are received. An understanding of your expectations and procedures for handling Observation Reports will cause most drivers to be more careful in the future.

Example: *"Please look at what the motorist said about this incident. Tell me what you remember about it. I know you understand that safety is our primary goal and that we take all motorists' observations seriously."*

Step Four: Focus on Driving Performance

Ask the driver to share all the reasons why his or her driving performance might have been judged as unsafe. Focus on the "driving performance" and not on "the driver".

Remember that you are not trying to make the driver feel bad or defensive, you are trying to change unacceptable or unsafe behavior.

Example: *"What do you remember about your driving performance that the caller could have judged as being unsafe?"*

Explain that everyone's goal needs to be safety, and that you want to help the employee do everything possible to be a safe, courteous driver.

Often, drivers will attempt to divert attention from their driving behavior to that of the motorist who called in the Observation Report. Keep the focus on the driver's behavior, don't get sidetracked on other issues.

Make sure the driver knows that you are not there to discuss other drivers but to talk about the Observation Report before you.

Example: Driver: *"But you never question the other bad drivers."* Supervisor: *"I want to assure you that we take each Observation Report seriously. Right now, we need to discuss the report from this motorist."*

Step Five: Use the Collision Countermeasures

Use the *Collision Countermeasures* to talk through how to avoid negative Observation Reports in the future. The *Collision Countermeasures*, produced by DriverCheck in cooperation with the National Safety Council, give background on, and ways to avoid, specific situations that are known to cause collisions.

The appropriate countermeasures are faxed once per month with a client's Observation Reports. Countermeasures are also available in print from DriverCheck, and they are available for downloading at DriverCheck's web site: www.drivercheck.net.

Give the driver a copy of the appropriate countermeasure and ask him or her to read it again after your meeting.

Example: *"Let's take a minute and look at this countermeasure developed by the National Safety Council. Let's see what it says we can do to avoid getting into situations that can result in a collision."*

Step Six: Ask for a Commitment to Improve

After discussing the appropriate countermeasure(s), ask the driver what things he or she could do in the future to improve driving performance.

Let the driver know what the company wants him or her to do. Ask what you can do to help the driver. Remember, 90 percent of collisions are caused by driver actions, which are the expressions of their behavior, attitude, and personal choices.

Encourage the driver to look for opportunities to exhibit safe, courteous driving behavior. Explain that your goal is for the driver to receive Observation Reports that are compliments. Explain that safe driving is a win-win for everybody: the public, the driver, and the company.

Example: *"Jim, now that we've looked over the countermeasures, what things could you do differently in the future to try to avoid a similar incident? We want everyone to be a safe driver—and beyond that, we want everyone to be a courteous driver. That way, everybody comes out ahead: the company, you, and the motorists you interact with every day."*

If this is the second verified Observation Report that contains a complaint, explain that this is the last opportunity you will have to offer help. Explain that, according to company policy, the next negative Observation Report will go to the next management level for review.

Step Seven: Follow up

Have a follow-up discussion with the driver during the next week. Ask the driver for input on the *Collision Countermeasures* he or she just reviewed. Thank the driver for being open to suggestions and for being committed to safety. Ask for help in encouraging other employees to be better drivers.

Example: *"Jim, now that you've had a chance to read the countermeasures again, what kind of feedback do you have? I want you to know that I appreciate your attitude and your commitment to safety. I hope you will be a model of safety for everyone else in the company."*

Counseling drivers helps to:

- Save lives
- Increase safety
- Decrease collision frequency and costs
- Increase job security

The Goal is Safety

Professionals in a variety of fields have developed safety guidelines and procedures to help in their work. Surgeons make an “X” on a patient’s forehead above an eye that is to be operated on. Maintenance workers disconnect the power and lock out machinery before attempting to service it. Skydivers carry backup parachutes.

They do these things because experience has shown that safety guidelines and procedures save lives, time, and money.

Surgeons, maintenance workers, and skydivers have something in common: most of them are also drivers. Yet many people who follow safety guidelines at work don’t think about safety behind the wheel. After all, driving is easy, right? Anybody can do it.

The problem is that many people do not drive safely, and the National Safety Council’s statistics show it. On the average in the United States, there are five deaths and 252 disabling injuries per hour related to motor-vehicle collisions.

Most of these fatalities and injuries are not caused by accidents, they are the result of preventable collisions. “Accident” denotes a non-preventable incident for which the driver has no responsibility. “Collision” refers to an incident that the driver could have prevented.

The goal of safety-conscious driving is to do everything reasonable to avoid a collision, regardless of who is at fault.

To Prevent Collisions, Drivers Must:

- Recognize the hazard
- Understand the defense
- Act correctly and in time

Driving defensively—that is, driving to avoid a collision—is a function of training and behavior.

Safety-Conscious Driving is Important for Three Reasons:

1. Safety: for the driver, the passengers, and for others
2. Money: vehicle maintenance, upkeep, collision costs, litigation costs, retraining, downtime, load loss, etc.
3. Professional image: for the driver and for the company

The Keys to Safety-Conscious Driving Are:

- Driver training
- Driver attitude and behavior
- Trip/route scheduling
- Alertness behind the wheel
- Reaction to hazardous situations

While driver training and experience are important, the best training and the most valuable experience can be negated by attitude. How you feel and what you think about are key factors in how safely you drive. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, attitude accounts for 60 percent of a driver’s contribution to highway safety.

Attitudes Can be Influenced by:

- Your personality type
- Stress at home
- Stress on the job
- The amount of sleep you get
- Whether or not you use alcohol
- Whether or not you use prescription medication
- Whether or not you use non-prescription medication
- The weather
- What has just happened to you during a driving incident

Knowing your personality type is an advantage. Knowing how you respond to stress is the first step in overcoming attitude and behavior problems while driving.

Remember, your driving behaviors are not caused by anyone else. You make a choice from one mile to the next how you will drive. Don’t let other drivers’ attitudes, behaviors, or bad choices determine how you will act behind the wheel.

When Observation Reports Come in

What Should I Do When I Begin Receiving Observation Reports?

Driver counseling is key to the success of the DriverCheck program. When effective counseling takes place:

- Negative driving behavior is modified
- Collision rates and costs go down
- Lives are saved
- Your company's bottom line increases

The Benefits of Counseling

Studies completed by the actuarial departments of major insurance companies show that clients who run the DriverCheck program well—counseling their drivers and returning completed incident reports to DriverCheck—see significant reductions in collision frequency and costs.

Counsel Each Driver Who Receives an Observation Report

To help you through the counseling process, please see the counseling tips and the specific countermeasures contained in this booklet. (Appropriate countermeasures are also faxed with observation reports.)

Return the Completed Observation Report to DriverCheck

After counseling the driver, complete the bottom portion of the Observation Report and fax it back to DriverCheck. If you receive the Observation Report by email, you may easily email the response using a link on the emailed report. Data from your returned observation reports is included in your summary reports and can be accessed using DriverCheck's Internet reporting system. Counseling the driver every time an observation report comes in lets that driver know that safety is a company priority.

What Do the Points on the Observation Report Mean?

DriverCheck has developed a point system to help you manage your safety program. Each driving problem or behavior that could result in a collision has been assigned a number based on severity. For example, littering is assigned a low point value. Collision with damage is assigned a high point value.

The points a driver receives are not cumulative. They do not show up on report summaries related to individual drivers. They are provided as a reference for you, should you want to use them.

How About Drivers Who Receive Compliments?

Approximately 10 percent of calls to DriverCheck are compliments. They come from people who have observed your employees driving in a safe and courteous manner. These compliments are wonderful public relations for your company. They can also help managers emphasize safety within the company.

Consider publicly recognizing drivers who receive Observation Reports containing compliments. This can be done in safety meetings where management is present. Let all in attendance know that your company appreciates each employee's contributions to safety.

Contact Us for Free MBA Awards

DriverCheck provides free of charge an MBA (Mobile Billboard Award) for presentation to drivers who receive compliments. Please ask your DriverCheck account manager for copies of this award.

Interested in electronic reporting options? DriverCheck allows you to receive and return Observation Reports, run *ad-hoc* reports, and do account maintenance on the web.

Helping Your Employees Become Safety-Conscious Drivers

Little league pitchers can throw a baseball at 70 miles-per-hour, and being hit by one can cause a serious injury. Now, imagine an object weighing thousands of pounds hurtling toward you at 70 miles-per-hour and you can sense the power of a van or truck on the open road.

Your company's drivers need your help in understanding how they should use the powerful vehicles they control. For safety's sake, and to help your company's bottom line, your drivers need to know exactly what is expected of them.

Clear guidelines and procedures related to recruiting, hiring, training, counseling, disciplining, terminating, and promoting drivers will help your company develop a culture of safety and professionalism.

The following are some suggestions for fleet/safety managers who want safety to be an important part of their corporate culture.

- Assign one person to manage all vehicle-related safety issues at your company or location.
- Make sure drivers understand that your company expects all its employees to be safety-conscious drivers.
- Develop and distribute a set of driving standards, outlining what your company considers to be safe driving. Emphasize that the primary goal is to do everything reasonable to avoid a collision, regardless of who is at fault.
- Develop a system for providing ongoing driver training.
- Establish a written policy on alcohol and substance abuse.
- Inform drivers about how violations of company driving policy will be handled.

- Establish a progressive procedure, including remedial training, for dealing with employees who violate company driving policies.
- Develop a procedure for counseling drivers soon after they receive DriverCheck Observation Reports.
- Return completed Observation Reports to DriverCheck as soon as possible after the counseling sessions.
- Make sure the reports are reviewed by the manager responsible for monitoring vehicle safety.
- Establish a formal program for recognizing safe and courteous drivers.
- Make sure drivers understand reaction time, reaction distance, and stopping distances for the vehicles they operate.
- Conduct regular safety inspections for all your company's vehicles.
- Schedule preventive maintenance on all your company's vehicles.
- Schedule periodic reviews of all your drivers' records.
- Ride with your drivers occasionally to assess performance.
- See that drivers, supervisors, and dispatchers are trained to identify drivers with unsafe driving behaviors.
- Model safety in your driving.
- Hold regular safety meetings.

Make sure all your drivers know that most "accidents" are not accidents at all. They are collisions that could have been prevented by safety-conscious driving behaviors. Compliment and reward safe drivers, for safety's sake, and for your company's bottom line.

Tailgating

What's more dangerous than flying? Driving, actually. Statistically, it's one of the most dangerous things humans can do. Not only is driving dangerous, most people consider themselves experts at it, believing that crashes are caused by "the other person". Unfortunately, to someone else, you are "the other person".

Each year in the United States, "the other person" causes collisions resulting in 40,000 fatalities and more than two million disabling injuries. These collisions cost more than \$170 billion.

Rear-end collisions are the most frequent, and the bad news is that the driver who strikes another from behind is almost always considered to be at fault. Tailgating (following too closely) is a function of driver behavior. Drivers tailgate to intimidate, to punish, to show impatience with the speed of the person in front, or because they are not attentive to what they are doing.

Tailgating is Not a Smart Way of Reacting to the Driver in Front. Why?

- Tailgaters think they are in control; in fact, it's the person in front who is in control.
- Tailgaters do not allow adequate time or distance to stop in case the person in front has to stop.
- Tailgating is especially dangerous in a truck because of the extra distance it takes to stop.

The Good News is That Rear-End Collisions are Almost Always Avoidable. How?

- Don't make your tight schedule someone else's emergency.
- Don't punish someone else for going slower than you would like them to. Your anger will not cause them to drive faster.
- In an automobile, follow at least two seconds behind the car in front of you. (Pick out a sign or a tree. As the rear of the vehicle ahead of you passes it, begin counting one-thousand-zero, one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two. Make sure that the front of your vehicle doesn't reach that landmark before you reach one-thousand-two.)
- Commercial vehicle operators should use the same system of counting, but they need a four-second space.

- If vehicle, road, or weather conditions are less than perfect, add an additional second for each hazard. This leaves you plenty of time and space to react to hazards without a panic. If the space in front of your vehicle is invaded by another vehicle, be patient, back off, and keep the required distance.
- Take control: control of your attitude, control of your vehicle.
- Don't conduct business while driving: don't talk on the phone, write notes to yourself, or try to read. Nothing is worth taking your attention away from the road in front of you.
- When stopped in traffic, make sure you can see the rear tires of the vehicle ahead of you touching the pavement. This gives you space to maneuver if that vehicle stalls. It ensures a space to move out in case of an attempted car jacking. It also allows skid space for your vehicle, if you are struck from the rear. If struck from the rear, you do not want to be pushed into the vehicle ahead of you.

And How Do You Deal With Someone Who is Tailgating You?

- First, as in all traffic incidents, don't make eye contact. Making eye contact tells the other driver "I'm mad, and I'm ready to fight." Don't stare at the other driver in the rear view mirror. Don't turn around and look. Don't fall into the trap of returning anger with anger. Things will only escalate.
- Don't give the driver behind you a "back off" signal of any kind. Ignore that person. Pretend you do not notice him.
- Don't speed away. You may still have a tailgater following you at dangerously high speeds.
- Don't hit your brakes suddenly. Gradually ease up on the accelerator until you have opened the following distance between the vehicle ahead and yours to four seconds. This gives the tailgater a place to pull into, if he chooses to pass. If he continues to tailgate, you have a large response space ahead of you.
- Give the tailgater plenty of chances to pass you. And, when he does, again, don't make eye contact. If the driver does not pass and persists in tailgating you, put on your blinkers and pull over to the side of the road or turn onto an exit to let him pass.

Speeding and Driving Too Fast for Conditions

You are late for an appointment or a delivery. So why not drive a little faster and ensure that you will get there on time?

Because you are least equipped to drive safely when you are under stress about your schedule. And, though you are generally a nice person, very considerate of others, you will by definition be selfish and uncaring as you speed to your destination. Speeders tailgate, cut in front of other drivers, run red lights and stop signs, drive in emergency lanes and on the shoulders of roads, and put others in danger. They take a me-first attitude and not a safety-conscious attitude.

The goal of safety-conscious driving is to avoid collisions. And driving to avoid collisions is not always the same as driving within the legal speed limit. It's possible to be driving within the speed limit and still be driving too fast for conditions.

What Should Influence How Fast We Drive?

- Weather
- Traffic conditions
- Road type and condition
- Tire condition, vehicle type, load, and weight
- How you feel

And especially consider what someone else might be doing. What if the car in front of you stops? A child runs into the street? Someone on a side street unexpectedly pulls in front of you? Remember, the key is not how fast you are going, but how long, under the current driving conditions, it takes you to stop.

Stopping distance equals your reaction distance plus the actual braking distance of your vehicle. Before a driver can stop a vehicle, the driver must perceive that there is a hazard or reason to stop. Perception time by US DOT standards can be any time from as little as one-tenth of a second to never.

Most drivers, after perceiving that a stop must be made, can react in about .75 seconds. The distance covered in .75 seconds for a vehicle moving at 55 mph is 60 feet.

This is true for cars, buses, and trucks.

To this distance, the actual braking distance must be added to determine total stopping distance. (For operators of air braked equipment, another factor has to be considered, and that is the time it takes the air pressure to activate the back brakes of the vehicle. This is called brake lag, and it changes on vehicles depending on the calibration of the equipment.)

At 55 mph, total stopping distance for an automobile is 224 feet. For an air braked tractor trailer, it is 335 feet. Poor road surface or weather that causes the surface of the road to be wet or icy makes all of the stopping distances significantly longer.

Before you drive, plan ahead. Considering the weather and traffic conditions, how long will it really take you to make the proposed trip? The first step in arriving on time safely is accurately estimating travel time under the current conditions.

Remember, there is a correlation between speed and traffic fatalities. In 1987, Congress allowed states to raise the speed limit on certain highways to 65 MPH. By 1989, fatalities on these roads had increased by 30 percent. Take conditions into consideration as you drive. Drive to avoid collisions. Take a safety-conscious attitude.

Ninety percent of all accidents are caused by driver actions, which are the expressions of their behavior, attitude, and personal choices.

—U.S. Department of Transportation

Improper Lane Change

The person beside you decides he should be in your lane, so he just moves over. No signal, no warning, no please-let-me-over hand gesture. He just moves into your space as though he owned it. You slam on the brakes or are pushed into another lane to avoid a collision. Been there? How did it make you feel? It wasn't a pleasant experience was it?

Any driving activity carries risk. Drivers may take a safety-conscious attitude, which means they will drive to avoid collisions regardless of who may be at fault. Or drivers may increase the risk of collisions by driving too fast for conditions, tailgating, or changing lanes improperly.

While we tend to brand these unsafe drivers as uncaring and selfish, let's give them the benefit of the doubt for a minute. Some are unaware of the problems they were causing.

Improper Lane Change is Often Attributable to One of the Following:

- Not concentrating on the surroundings while driving
- Me-first attitude
- Impatience
- Can't-be-late attitude
- Revenge

While these are human reactions and attitudes, they will never be part of a safe driving environment.

Lane-change collisions usually involve sideswiping or running someone off the road. Looking ahead, thinking ahead, and anticipating lane changes are keys to safe lane changes. With more lanes on our highways and expressways, there is more room for other vehicles to swerve in and out, and this increases the chances of a sideswipe.

- Before a lane change, use both short-and long-range scanning. Check your mirrors and know what is ahead of you, behind you, and beside you.

- Turn your head to check blind spots.
- Signal your intention to change lanes.
- Check mirrors again.
- Be on the lookout for other vehicles moving into the lane you are moving toward. This is a frequent cause of lane-change collisions: two drivers moving into the same lane simultaneously.
- When passing, assume the person you are passing does not see you, and be ready to react quickly if he veers into your lane.

Many lane-change collisions are caused by blind spots. Blind spots are often caused when drivers adjust their outside mirrors so that a portion of the side of the car is still visible. At this position, the angle of view of the inside and outside mirrors overlap behind the car, ensuring that a car approaching from the rear is visible in both. However, this creates a wide angle outside the field of view alongside the car where the image disappears from both.

If drivers rotate mirrors 15 degrees farther outward, the blind spot will be eliminated. To do this, place your head against the driver's side window and adjust the outside mirror until the side of the car just disappears. Moving your head as far toward the center of the car as you did to the left, adjust the passenger side mirror until that side of the car just disappears. The wide-set mirrors also eliminate night-time headlight glare by not reflecting it directly into the driver's eyes.

Remember also that the larger the vehicle, the more blind spots it will have. When following or driving beside a commercial vehicle, remember that if you cannot see the reflection of the driver in the side mirror, the driver cannot see you.

Urban expressways and streets are becoming more congested. Being willing to share the road and anticipate hazards will help avoid problem situations.

The goal of safety-conscious driving is to do everything reasonable to avoid a collision, regardless of who is at fault.

Running Red Lights/Stop Signs

The light is changing, but I know it will be red on my side a second or so before it turns green on the other side. So if I step on the gas, I can just scoot on through the light and save a little time.”

Does this sound familiar? Has this thought ever crossed your mind? In today’s traffic-filled streets, running a red light is tempting. And as long as we don’t hurt anyone, it’s OK—right?

People who run red lights or stop signs seldom intend to hurt anyone. But many lives are lost each year because someone was trying to save a few seconds. In many parts of North America, running red lights and stop signs has become an epidemic. It is so widespread that some people no longer feel uncomfortable doing it.

Running red lights or stop signs is a dangerous gamble for drivers, their passengers, and for innocent motorists and pedestrians. This driving behavior comes from a me-first attitude rather than a safety-conscious attitude. The goal of a safety-conscious driver is to avoid collisions.

As You Drive, Think About the Following:

- Traffic lights and stop signs were put in place to help everyone. They help provide order out of chaos.
- Keeping on schedule is important, but is it worth endangering the lives of others? We all want to get to our destinations as quickly as possible—but we don’t want to hurt ourselves or others in the process.

Here Are Some Tips on Driving Safely in Areas With Traffic Lights and Stop Signs.

- Drive at a safe speed: that usually means driving within the posted speed limit. However, in adverse

conditions (weather, poor roads, etc.) a safe speed may mean below the posted speed limit. What does speed have to do with running red lights? Many people run red lights because they believe they are traveling too fast to stop in the amount of time allotted.

- Scan 12-15 seconds ahead of you (one to one-and-a-half blocks). Check the condition of the traffic light ahead.
- Anticipate a change in a traffic light and be prepared to stop. Do not speed up when approaching a traffic light. If the light changes, you will have two choices: run the light or slam on the brakes to stop short. Both actions could cause a collision. Anticipation is important because of reaction time. It takes approximately .75 seconds from the time you see a potential hazard until the time you are able to apply the brakes.
- Watch for others who run red lights. Even if the light on your side is green, look both ways before proceeding.
- Learn to relax at red lights. Use the time for a relaxation break, thinking about something other than schedules, work, etc. Too many people are fuming at red lights. Breathe deeply, relax, and lower your blood pressure naturally.
- Come to a full stop at stop signs. Look left, then right, then left. As you look back left, check the vehicle across from you to make sure it is not making a left turn in front of you. Assure yourself that the road is clear before proceeding. Know the difference between a rolling stop and a complete stop. The police do.
- At red lights and stop signs, in all your driving, be an example for others. Treat them the way you would like to be treated. Think of how safe and how pleasant it would be if all drivers were safety-conscious drivers.

Driving While Impaired

In his novel *Baja Oklahoma*, author Dan Jenkins humorously describes the ten stages of intoxication. The first is “witty and charming”. Number nine is “invisible”, and the last one is “bulletproof”.

But Jenkins is writing fiction. In the real world, “bulletproof” and “invisible” are not attributes of alcohol consumption. Unfortunately, many drivers impaired by alcohol or drugs feel they are both.

How much alcohol can you drink and still be legal? It varies. In some states, the *prima facie* law which determines alcohol intoxication for drivers is .10. Many states have already lowered theirs to .08. But remember that you can be arrested driving under the influence of alcohol without reaching those limits. (Drivers holding a commercial driver’s license cannot drive for 24 hours if their level reaches .02. They lose their driver’s licenses for one year on a first conviction of operating above .04.)

How much alcohol can you drink and still be safe behind the wheel? The answer is none, because alcohol is a depressant, greatly reducing reaction time. Alcohol consumption and driving do not mix, just as alcohol consumption and surgery do not mix.

Alcohol:

- Impairs judgement
- Gives a false sense of confidence
- Reduces your field of vision
- Lowers your hearing acuity
- Reduces your ability to concentrate
- Impairs your balance, coordination, and motor skills

Statistics Bear out These Observations.

- Six percent of all collisions involve alcohol; however,
- Forty percent of all fatalities involve intoxicated or alcohol-impaired drivers or non-motorists
- The cost of alcohol-related collisions is more than \$24 billion per year

Remember, alcohol and gasoline are a lethal cocktail. Alcohol is the leading factor in fatal collisions. But impaired driving is more than driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Stress, fatigue, even over-the-counter medications can impair a driver’s abilities.

Physical and Emotional Stress can Result From:

- Work schedules
- Work problems
- Family problems
- Workload
- Road and weather conditions
- Traffic conditions
- Vehicle conditions (breakdowns, etc.)

To Reduce Stress Before and During Driving:

- Plan so that you have adequate traveling time
- Do relaxation and breathing exercises at red lights and in stop-and-go traffic, when frustrations can mount
- Take breaks at rest areas—at least one ten-minute break every two hours
- Ignore drivers with negative attitudes; don’t let the attitudes of others determine how you will drive
- Let offensive drivers get ahead of you. Remembering that they are not acting rationally, expect them to slam on their brakes. You must be ready for this. If you brake suddenly, you may be hit from the rear.

To Minimize Fatigue While Driving:

- Allow adequate time for sleep
- Do not use alcohol to go to sleep
- Avoid heavy meals before bedtime
- Schedule trips so that you disturb your biological clock as little as possible: travel during daylight hours, sleep at night
- Get regular exercise but not just before sleep
- Avoid inconsistent napping during the day

To Increase Your Alertness While Driving:

- Scan the road ahead, alongside, and behind your vehicle
- Use safe following distances
- Use good posture while driving
- Be flexible and adjust to driving conditions

Driving is a privilege and a responsibility. Take it seriously. Be a safety-conscious driver. Don’t try to drive while impaired by alcohol, other substances, or fatigue.

Backing Collisions

In most fleets, one of every four collisions involves backing. Though backing is done at low speeds, backing collisions are responsible for tremendous vehicle and property damages—and they can injure or kill pedestrians.

While backing, your field of vision is severely limited. Your vehicle's body obstructs much of the path of travel. And hand-eye coordination is more difficult when driving in reverse.

Avoid Backing When Possible

It's an easy solution—and it works. Here are three things you can do to avoid backing:

1. Plan your route ahead. Look for ways to park, load, and unload that will not require you to back your vehicle.
2. If you miss an entrance, do not back up to reach it. Drive around the block and approach it from the front.
3. Drive through alleys and driveways so that you can leave head first.

When You Must Backup

1. Get Out and Get the Picture
 - Walk around your vehicle to get a complete picture of where you will be backing.
 - Look for anything that is, or could move into, your line of travel. Are there people nearby? What about parked or moving vehicles or other objects? Are there road depressions or debris that may cause a problem?
 - Check overhead clearances. Is there an overhang or other obstruction that the top of your vehicle might strike?
 - Check side clearances. Are you absolutely sure there is enough room for your vehicle? If you are not absolutely sure, don't back.
2. After Checking, Start Backing Immediately Before the Picture Changes
 - Start your backing movement as close to the dock or the parking space as possible. This reduces the distance you will have to travel in reverse, reducing the potential for problems.

3. Back Slowly
This helps you maintain control of your vehicle and helps you judge distances more accurately.
4. Check Both Sides as You Back
If you know that you have clearance on the top and on the right (passenger) side, then you can concentrate on the left (driver) side of the vehicle as you back. Use your outside mirrors as often as necessary.
5. Stop and Look Again
To ensure that you are correctly judging distance, stop when you are about three-quarters of the way into your backing maneuver, set the brake, get out of the vehicle and take another look. Also, if you feel unsure of your progress, or if you sense that anything has changed since you started your backing maneuver, stop and take a look.
6. Pace Off the Remaining Distance
To give yourself a visual reference for the remainder of your backing maneuver, try this exercise: Pace off the distance between the back of the vehicle and the front of the dock. Then, starting at the driver's side mirror, pace off the same distance toward the rear of the vehicle. At that point, put a mark on the ground. By keeping an eye on the mark as you back, you'll know how close you are to your final stopping place.
7. Use a Reliable Person to Help Guide You
When possible, have someone guide you into position. This person should stand so that he or she can see you and the blind zone behind your vehicle. A guide can warn you if pedestrians or vehicles begin to move into your way.

Road Rage

In the past 10 years, the number of vehicles on our highways has increased 35 percent, while actual highway space has increased only one percent. More people, more cars, less space—can you predict what will happen?

Competition, frustration, delays, anger, a feeling of entrapment: these are some of the feelings that result from putting more people and vehicles in the same amount of space.

Add that to the feelings of people who may be under stress for other reasons and you have a prescription for road rage. Nice people can become suddenly territorial, antisocial, revengeful and they've got a weapon weighing several tons at their disposal.

You've heard or read the stories in the media. Someone is assaulted or even killed during a fight after a traffic incident. Automobiles have been used as battering rams after a minor traffic incident turns into a major confrontation.

How Do You Handle the Person Who Has Become Enraged?

- First, act, don't react. Give the other driver time to cool down. Regardless of what triggered the incident, try not to get emotionally involved. Then you will have two enraged drivers instead of one.
- Remember your goal is to remain safe and to avoid causing a collision. Your goal is not to prove that you are right or to extract revenge for a perceived or actual wrong that might have taken place.

- Don't make eye contact. This is one of the quickest ways of diffusing the problem. Eye contact is often interpreted by an enraged person as a threat.
- Don't honk your horn, flash your lights, tailgate, or gesture in any way.
- Let the person pass, let them in front of you, actually, let them go wherever they want to go.
- Remember that no one "wins" a highway confrontation. For your safety and for the safety of others, one person needs to stay rational and in control. That person needs to be you. It won't matter tomorrow if someone cuts in front of you today. It will matter tomorrow if you are involved in a collision or a confrontation because of someone else's inappropriate driving behavior.

How Do You Keep From Becoming Enraged?

- Don't drive if you are upset about work or other problems. If you must drive, take stock of your emotions; take time to calm down. Know that you are upset and don't take your frustrations out on your car or on other drivers.
- Remember that your goal is to drive so that you avoid collisions. Even if you are mad, revenge is not the answer.
- Keep in mind that this is a crowded, complex world, and other people make mistakes. Even when someone cuts you off, breaks in line, tailgates, etc., don't react outwardly. Don't let the other driver know they made you mad. This keeps you in control of the situation. People who cut you off, tailgate, etc., are already on the edge for some reason. Don't give them a push.

Companies that counsel drivers and return Observation Reports with managers' comments see significant reductions in collision frequency and costs.

NSC Collision-Prevention Tips

The goal of safety-conscious driving should be to avoid an accident regardless of who is at fault. Here are some facts and tips from the National Safety Council on how to do just that.

Survey the Road Ahead

- As you drive, look ahead at the traffic situation and ask yourself, What if?
- What if the vehicle in front of me stops quickly? Will I be able to stop in time to avoid a collision?
- What if the vehicle on the side of the road pulls out in front of me? What could I do to avoid a collision?
- What if the person to my left or right suddenly changes lanes? How will I avoid hitting that person or others around me?
- In short, look for potential problems and think about how you would react to them so as to avoid a collision.

Remember that the majority of deaths and serious injuries occur less than 25 miles from home and at speeds of under 40 miles per hour. Be vigilant at all times and at all speeds.

Take a Pre-Trip Inventory

Before you drive, make a pre-trip mental inventory. Ask yourself:

- Can I expect any unusual road, weather, or traffic conditions?
- How do I feel, both mentally and physically?

Practice some things that will help relieve stress while driving:

- Do relaxation exercises
- Take regular breaks at rest stops
- Ignore drivers who are aggressive or are driving with an “attitude”
- Let offensive drivers get in front of you

Don't Drive While Fatigued

Remember that driver fatigue is a major contributor to collisions. Most collisions occur during two time periods: between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., and between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Sleep deprivation, a source of fatigue,

is cumulative. As sleep debt increases, alertness decreases.

To Minimize Fatigue:

- Avoid inconsistent napping
- Sleep in a dark room or wear a light-blocking mask
- Eliminate noise
- Do not use alcohol to sleep
- Avoid heavy meals before sleep
- Get regular exercise, but do so well before trying to sleep

Prepare for Split-Second Decisions

Sometimes, life-and-death decisions must be made almost instantaneously. When, for example, a head-on collision appears imminent, there may be little time to think through a variety of options. Drivers are often called upon to act instinctively. Here are some mental notes to keep in mind in case you are faced with a possible head-on collision. We hope you never have to use them, but, in case you do, they are valuable safety tips.

- Drive right not left. If the oncoming driver moves into your lane and then recovers, the driver's instinct will be to swerve back into his or her lane. If you swerved left, both vehicles will be in the same lane. Drive right to avoid this contingency.
- If you must leave the road, drive off, don't skid off. Try to maintain control of your vehicle if you need to leave the road.
- If necessary, hit something soft. Hitting a shrub or a breakaway barrel is less dangerous than hitting a telephone pole or a wall.
- If you have a choice between hitting a fixed object or an oncoming vehicle, choose the fixed object. Two colliding vehicles are more likely to result in death or disabling injuries.
- If hitting something is inevitable, hit it with a glancing blow, not head-on. For every inch you hit off-center, you reduce your chance of being seriously injured or killed.

Remember: You Determine How You Drive

Don't let other drivers' bad choices or attitudes determine how you drive. You don't let them choose others actions in your life. Be a safety-conscious driver. Drive to avoid a collision, regardless of who is at fault.

Thank you for Our Partnership in Safety

DriverCheck's Goal

DriverCheck thanks you for our partnership for safety. Since our founding in 1986, DriverCheck's goal has been to help insurance companies and individual clients reach their goals for a safer, more profitable tomorrow.

Electronic-Reporting Options

DriverCheck offers a variety of electronic-reporting options at no additional cost. You may receive and return Observation Reports by email. At our web site (www.drivercheck.net) you may enter a unique user i.d and password, and:

- Run, view, print, and export in Excel format on-line real-time *ad-hoc* reports, which can be sorted by a variety of criteria
- Run, view, print, and export into Excel format periodic management summary reports
- Update your fleet on-line, add and delete vehicles, request replacement decals, etc.
- Contact any member of the DriverCheck team



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To get setup for Observation Reports by email and/or for reports and account management on the web, please contact your DriverCheck account manager.

A graphic advertisement for the M2100 system. It features a red background with white text. The text reads "HOW'S MY DRIVING?" in a large, bold font, followed by "M2100" in a very large, bold font. Below this, it says "CALL 1-800-2 ADVISE" in a large, bold font. At the bottom left is the DriverCheck logo, and at the bottom right is the text "A 24 HOUR RISK MANAGEMENT SYSTEM" in a smaller font.

HOW'S MY DRIVING?™ M2100
CALL 1-800-2 ADVISE
DriverCheck "A 24 HOUR RISK MANAGEMENT SYSTEM"