



A MINI TRAINING SESSION FOR INJURY PREVENTION

Quick Take on Safety

Defensive Driving

TRAINING OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- Overview: Covers various defensive driving topics, such as pre-drive planning, techniques and tips to prevent accidents while driving.
- Purpose: To provide employees safe driving tips to prevent accidents and injuries.
- Preparation: Read and become familiar with this Quick Take and review driving policies for your organization. *Change this Quick Take as needed to reflect procedures and personnel in your department.*
- Handouts: Quick Review of Safety—Defensive Driving
- Notes:
- MCIT sponsors up to two in-person defensive driving classes for its members each year at no cost. These training sessions are two hours and cover the below topics and more in much greater detail. For more information, visit the [MCIT.org/defensive-driving/](https://www.mcit.org/defensive-driving/).
 - Other driving related Quick Takes are Safer Travel in Winter, Procedures for After an Auto Accident, Deer-vehicle Collisions, Distracted Driving and Fatigue: Drowsy Driving. These are available at [MCIT.org/quick-takes-on-safety/](https://www.mcit.org/quick-takes-on-safety/).
 - The MCIT Video Library includes a number of driving safety training items that can be borrowed for up to three weeks at no cost. Learn more at [MCIT.org/video-library/](https://www.mcit.org/video-library/).

Defensive Driving

Statistically, driving is the most dangerous activity most of us do every day. More than 40,000 people died in 2017 due to motor vehicle crashes, giving the lifetime odds of death while driving at 1 in 103, according to the Insurance Information Institute. And the National Safety Council estimates that up to 70 percent of adults will experience a significant crash during their lifetimes.

[*Instructor prompt:* Ask the group, By a show of hands, how many of you have been or know someone who has been in a vehicle crash or collision?]

With this in mind, it is important to prepare for and anticipate potential situations when behind the wheel. Fortunately, what's known as defensive driving can reduce both the chance and potential severity of an accident. So please pay attention; we don't want you to get hurt.

Before Driving

Defensive driving begins before even entering traffic. The following are some examples of planning prior to driving that can help keep yourself and others safe on the road.

- Be well-rested before going for a drive. Driving fatigued can be every bit as dangerous as impaired driving.

- Review weather forecasts and the route to take. This can help you plan for the amount of time a trip will take and can help prevent distractions, such as fumbling with maps or navigation systems, or feeling rushed.
- Keep the vehicle well-maintained and supplied with adequate fuel, oil and other liquids. Address any problems with the vehicle, such as check engine lights or other warning indicators quickly.
- Prepare emergency repair tools, a first-aid kit, winter survival kit, window breaking tool or other equipment to help should the car break down.
- Do a quick visual inspection of the vehicle. This can include:
 - Checking tires for pressure
 - Inspecting windshield wipers
 - Ensuring that headlights, brake lights and turn signals are functioning.
 - The vehicle owner's manual may provide other pre-check items.
- Adjust the seat and mirrors to minimize blind spot; and ensure equipment, such as GPS and radio, are programmed before the vehicle is moving.
- Finish eating, grooming or applying cosmetics prior to driving.
- Secure any items to prevent them from rolling around during the drive. If anything does roll around, do not attempt to retrieve items while driving. Rather, pull over safely and come to a complete stop before retrieving items.
- Buckle the seatbelt and ensure all passengers are also buckled prior to putting the vehicle in motion. This is perhaps the single most important life-saving device in your vehicle. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of wearing seat belts for you and your passengers.
- Be aware of any medications that may affect your ability to operate motor vehicles safely and plan accordingly.

While Driving

While driving, the only task you should be doing is driving. Follow these tips to help ensure you get to your destination without incident.

- Avoid speeding; speeding contributes to most serious accidents, as it limits reaction time and increases the amount of time it takes to stop. For example, a vehicle traveling at 60 miles per hour is moving at 88 feet per/second.
- Maintain an adequate following distance behind the vehicle in front of you and around the vehicle. As a general rule 3 to 4 seconds of distance between you and the car ahead of you should give sufficient reaction time should something develop ahead.
 - Remember, humans take about three-fourths of a second to react. So at 30 miles per hour, the vehicle would move 33 feet in the time it takes you to react to a situation. You need to be able to stop in the distance you can see!
 - At higher speeds or during inclement weather, the following distance may need to be increased to more than 3-4 seconds.
- Keep your eyes up and scan your surroundings in all directions.
 - Anticipate actions of other drivers or pedestrians. Give them plenty of time and space.
 - Scan far down the road.
- Do not assume that another driver approaching a stop sign or traffic light will stop until you see evidence of them coming to a stop. This is also true when braking; keep an eye on the rear view mirror to verify following cars are braking with sufficient stopping distance.
- About 30 percent of all fleet collisions occur when backing up. Plan your exit when you arrive, and avoid or minimize backing to avoid backing collisions.
- Use turn signals and give other drivers plenty of time to see and acknowledge your intentions.
- Be aware of your vehicle's blind spots and be sure to check them when changing lanes.

- Avoid driving in the blind spots of other vehicles.
- Pull off the road and legally park to make calls, or use a hands-free option when having conversations.
 - Avoid complex or emotional calls on the phone or with passengers until you arrive at your destination or are legally parked.
- Driving itself can be stressful, and other drivers or pedestrians can increase this stress. Do not, however, allow your frustrations or anger to lead to reckless behavior.
- When passing accidents or other objects of interest, resist the urge to gawk or “rubberneck,” as this increases the risks of further crashes and can put yourself as well as emergency responders at risk. Slow down and move over to give a safe working space for responders.

Never drive a vehicle after consuming alcohol or illicit drugs. People often underestimate the effects these substances have upon their ability to drive a vehicle safely.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What else can we do to become better and safer drivers?



Defensive Driving Session Planning and Review

Trainer

Training
Date

Department(s)

TRAINING GOALS

- Remind employees of the importance of defensive driving.
- Give employees tips and best practices for both before driving and when driving.

RESOURCES

- “Speeding (A Sample Safety Talk),” Minnesota Safety Council, MinnesotaSafetyCouncil.org.
- “The Driver and Congestion,” Minnesota Safety Council, MinnesotaSafetyCouncil.org.
- “Seat Belt Use (A Sample Safety Talk),” Minnesota Safety Council, MinnesotaSafetyCouncil.org.
- “Fact Sheets: Safety How-Tos – Traffic Safety,” Minnesota Safety Council, MinnesotaSafetyCouncil.org.
- “Facts + Statistics: Mortality Risk,” Insurance Information Institute, III.org.
- Driving safety training videos, MCIT Video Library, MCIT.org/video-library/
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NHTSA.gov.

REVIEW

Did the training meet the stated goals?

How can the training be improved?

TRAINER COMMENTS

Attendance Record

Training Session Defensive Driving

Trainer

Training Date

Participant Name (printed)	Participant Signature