

STAFETY COMPENDIUM – POOR DRIVING BEHAVIORS

As professional drivers, Postal employees who perform driving duties as part of their work day, we are faced with sharing the road with many who have not had the benefit of the defensive driving skills for which we have been trained.

On average, there are more than six million car accidents each year in the U.S. Most of the accidents are caused by unsafe driving behaviors.

Dan Markiewicz, MS, CIH, CSP, CHMM, provides these descriptions of poor driving behaviors of those who share the road with you and me. Have you seen these poor driving behaviors before?

Blind Sider

What they do is keep you just in front of them and on their right side. They see you well, but they stay in your mirror's blind spot.

Gap Filler

You know that safe distance we must keep between our car and the vehicle in front of us so we can stop in time if needed? The Gap Filler slides into this spot and causes us to back off to regain the safe distance.

Tailgater

This traditional at-risk behavior describes the driver who sits too close to your rear bumper and won't back off.

Drafter

This is the NASCAR-inspired driver who thinks he or she can save gas by driving close behind a big-rig.

Left Laner

Drivers should keep in the right lane except for passing; we all know this. Somehow left laners don't.

Pusher

A Pusher moves vehicles in front of them out of the way. You see them coming in your mirror, their headlights flashing on and off in the night, and move out of the way for fear getting rear-ended.

Frogger

Froggers jump from lane to lane to move ahead as if they're chasing a checkered flag. Like NASCAR drivers they will cut across multiple lanes at a time. Their objective is to shave 30 seconds off every 15-mile commute.

Speed Racer

"Go speed racer, go!" If you've seen the cartoon character, you know these types of drivers.

Slinky

On the open road this driver will reach the speed limit and then slow down for no apparent reason — and then repeat this action again and again.

Roller Coaster

A Roller Coaster's speed diminishes as they climb a hill even with a modest incline. On the downside of the hill their speed increases. I understand why some trucks with heavy loads perform the Roller Coaster maneuver, but even four-cylinder cars shouldn't have to do this.

Decelerator

When you're on the merge ramp, you should match the speed of the flowing traffic and pick your spot before entering the highway. This usually means you must accelerate to the posted speed limit. The Decelerator doesn't get this. They'll

come to the end of the merge ramp at a very slow pace hesitantly hoping to find a wide gap to allow them to enter the highway. This causes drivers behind them to become a Decelerator. When the Decelerator enters the highway at a very slow speed, they become an Obstacle (see below).

Obstacle

Speeders are bad but sometimes Obstacles are worse. An Obstacle is someone going considerably below the speed limit.

Out-of-the-Blue

Out-of-the-Blue drivers stop abruptly, dart in front of you, or jerk into your lane. Maybe they have a reason for their actions, and maybe not. Alcohol-impaired drivers may do something out-of-the-blue.

Crazy

Crazy drivers weave across lanes, go too slow or go too fast. And they keep repeating this dangerous behavior. You just know something is wrong with a Crazy driver. They're an accident about to happen.

Multi-Tasker

Police jurisdictions across the nation are trying to control the Multi-Tasker. This driver may be seen applying make-up, having a cell phone to their ear, or even reading.

Gawker

The gawker will practically stop on the road to watch the results of an accident, even when police are directing them to keep moving.

Road Rager

If you take out your frustrations on fellow drivers, probably because of some of the irritating and risky actions mentioned above, you exhibit the commonly understood behavior of road rage.

Example

The Example is the lucky driver who survived an accident and is waiting for help, or is sheepishly waiting to be ticketed after being pulled over for a traffic violation. We would hope that the average Gawker learns from the embarrassed Example.

Have you seen any of these bad driving behaviors?

Would any of these driving behaviors fit you?

Sources: Adapted from ISHN December 2007, p.20