

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION THREE – ATTITUDE

PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING

Patience and understanding are traits found in too few drivers.

To remain ‘cool’ when another driver makes a mistake, is slow or hesitant in front of you is one thing; being able to deal with another driver’s aggression while remaining calm is quite another. The driver who has never made a mistake may throw the first directive at another driver.

“Do to others as you would have them do to you” remains the best advice while you drive.

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CHANGING EMOTIONS

Be aware of any mood change as you drive.

When we feel different, we drive different. Anger and frustration narrows our zone of awareness; elation may allow us to act with less care. Recognise how you are feeling and adjust your driving to suit.

Keep 'cool' as you drive.

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SICKNESS AND WORRY

Sickness and worry are very dangerous for driving.

We may not associate sickness and worry with dangerous driving, but these conditions may reduce concentration and slow reaction. If you are upset, worried, have a headache or you are not well, drive only when necessary and take extra care.

Take care of yourself and your driving when you are under par.

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HELPING ANOTHER DRIVER OUT

Sometimes moves in traffic don't work out as planned. Help the other driver out if you can.

Sometimes drivers make a move when everything appears to be okay, but suddenly a third driver does something that blocks the path or perhaps the car stalls, etc. Ask yourself: Can I do something to help? Perhaps I can create a bigger gap, or stop back from the problem and turn on the hazard lights for a moment until the problem is solved.

A 'bad-attitude' statement would be: "Get out of my way you idiot, I have the right-of-way".

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FOUR-POINT APPROACH PLAN

Plan your approach to intersections, hill-crests and bends early.

KNOW where you will place your vehicle on the road and plan the best speed to enter the danger zone.

SHOW other drivers what you intend in plenty of time by signalling or flashing your brake lights.

SLOW early for the best view, and get control with the gears.

GO deliberately once you have made a safe decision.

The Plan is **KNOW, SHOW, SLOW & GO**.

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BRAKES AND GEARS

Use your brakes to slow and change your gears separately when you finish braking.

Changing gears during braking places unnecessary stress on your vehicle's transmission and produces a very dangerous reaction during an emergency. In an emergency you can only react in line with your well practiced habits. Drivers who have a habit of changing gears while they brake react terribly in an emergency. Make a habit of separating these tasks; use one brake application followed by one gear change directly to the best gear.

Brakes to slow, gears to control.

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GEAR CHANGE TIMING

Gear change timing equals vehicle control mastery.

Good driving avoids gear changing in danger zones such as: intersections, hill crests, bends or bad patches of road surfaces. Get the speed right early, and then select the best gear before reaching the danger zone to give you the best control through it.

Brakes to slow, gears to control.

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AUTOMATIC GEARS

An automatic vehicle can't always select the best gear.

It is interesting that drivers tend to over use the gears in a manual and under use them in an automatic. When you are going down steep hills, through difficult bends or on a rough, slippery surface it is wise to select the gear in an automatic just like you do in a manual. Turning on the 'Power-shift' is a halfway measure which will often help.

In difficult driving conditions stay in charge of the gear selection because the automatic may make a bad choice.

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LEFT SIGNAL DANGER

Don't have your left signal on while passing straight through an intersection.

You may intend to park just beyond the intersection, pull into the service road or the service station on the corner. If you have your signal on while you are going through the intersection, someone may think you are turning left and pull in front of you by mistake.

Be very careful about what your signal may suggest to another driver.

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GIVE MOTOR CYCLES ROOM

Give motorcycles as much room as you would any other vehicle.

Because motorcycles are smaller than cars, drivers often leave them less room. Show respect and courtesy to motorcycles. Make sure that you keep even more gap behind a motorcycle because it can stop quicker than a car when it is travelling in a straight line.

Show respect to motorcycles and give them plenty of room.

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HIGH-BEAM LIGHTS BEHIND A TRUCK

Keep your lights on low-beam when you are travelling behind a truck at night.

Truck's rear-vision mirrors are much larger than car's and reflect much more light into the driver's eyes. A truck driver can be completely dazzled and may suffer pain if your lights are up. When you overtake a truck, wait until your head lights pass the truck's mirror before you switch to high beam.

Keep your head lights on low beam further when you are behind a truck than you do for other vehicles.

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DIPPING HEAD LIGHTS

Dip your headlights earlier for a truck than you need to for a smaller vehicle.

Truck drivers see the head lights of an oncoming car much earlier than the car driver sees the truck's lights. This is because the truck driver's eyes are much higher from the road than the car driver's eyes; while the head lights of both types of vehicles are a similar height.

When you see the little lights at the top of the truck, dip your lights.

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BETTER VEHICLE DESIGN

Don't 'push the envelope' when you drive a better vehicle.

In these days of more technically advanced vehicles, some drivers drive faster, brake later and steer harder because they believe that the better vehicle will save them. The safer drivers keep the advances in vehicle design as a reserve against a mistake.

Safety still depends on your observation, judgement and attitude.

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BEING TAIL-GATED

If you are being tail-gated by another driver, focus on what is in front, not what is behind.

Open up more gap to the vehicle ahead and try to anticipate the traffic scene ahead. This will enable you to brake so smoothly, even in an emergency that the driver behind has time to react to you. At the first opportunity, encourage the tail-gater to overtake you by easing to the left, then slowing a little more.

Having the tail-gater in front of you is peace of mind and costs you nothing but one car's length in the traffic stream.

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VEHICLE MOVES OFF

When a vehicle moves from a parked position, don't assume they will see you or give way to you.

Drivers make mistakes when they are in a hurry, forget to look right around or have a blocked view. Look for signs that a vehicle may move off: people doing up seat belts, puffs of exhaust vapour, steering tyres move, or indicators flash. Think about the safest thing that you can do to help other drivers around you as well as keeping out of danger yourself.

Don't assume others will always do the right thing.

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ANGLE PARKING

When reversing out of an angle park, keep as much road clear as possible.

Some drivers reverse straight out of an angle park towards the centre of the road, and then turn right to go forwards. This is dangerous because it blocks too much road and there is potential for a collision with the next parked car. As you clear the parked vehicle each side, steer full left until your vehicle is parallel with the road and straighten your steering.

Keep out of the traffic stream and get straight with the street as much as you can as you come out of a park.

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LONG VEHICLE TURNING

When a long vehicle is turning, don't drive beside it.

Long vehicles have “NO-OVERTAKING-TURNING-VEHICLE” signs on the back. This means that it is illegal for another vehicle to drive beside them while they are turning. Long vehicles cannot fit in a lane designed for a car while they are turning.

Stay behind a long vehicle while it is turning.

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OVERTAKING A LARGE VEHICLE

Don't overtake a large vehicle going up a hill unless you are sure that you can keep ahead of it on the next down grade.

Many of the new trucks have engines so powerful that they can maintain the speed limit most of the time, so you won't be held up for long if you are stuck behind them. Many of the large trucks weigh 40 or 60 tonnes while a private car weighs around one tonne. The impact force of a 40 tonne truck at 100 km/h is about the same as a private car at twice the speed of sound.

It is safer behind a big truck than in front of it.

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KEEP BEHIND A STOPPING TRUCK

Don't pull in front of a truck while it is coming towards traffic lights or a stop-sign.

A heavy truck spreads its braking over a longer distance than a small vehicle. The truck driver looks ahead to the point where the truck must stop and judges the braking accordingly. If you pull into that space after the braking has commenced you may have shortened the distance so much that the truck can't stop.

Keep behind or in a different lane from the truck.