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OVERVIEW

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DEFENSIVE DRIVING

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More than 19,000,000 collisions occur every year on American highways, and one out of every nine licensed drivers will have a collision each year. More than 40,000 people die on American highways each year, and another 1,500,000 suffer disabling injuries. Many of these deaths, injuries, and accidents could be prevented by using Defensive Driving Techniques. The purpose of a Defensive Driving Course is to avoid collisions by fostering safer driving habits. Every licensed driver should consider taking a Defensive Driving Course. The [National Safety Council](#) has developed an excellent [Defensive Driving Course](#).

Defensive Driving – Defensive driving is driving to save lives, time, and money, in spite of the conditions around you and the actions of others.

Preventable Collisions – A preventable collision is one which the driver failed to do everything **reasonable** to avoid.

The Defensive Driving Collision Prevention Formula:

Recognize the Hazard by:

- Scanning the road ahead.
- In the city: scanning ahead about one block or to the next intersection.
- In rural areas and on expressways: scanning to the next hill, curve, or exit and entrance ramps.
- Checking the traffic behind every five seconds using the inside and outside rear view mirrors.

Understand the Defense:

- Know the situation, and know what to do.
- Practice defensive actions mentally to stay alert.

Act Correctly, in time:

- Select the correct actions, and use them in time to avoid a collision.

The Most Important Person: The Driver

Some considerations for the driver are:

- Always wear a safety belt.
- Physical conditions of the driver can affect driving: age, vision, hearing, mobility, illness, fatigue, drowsiness, and drugs and alcohol use.
- Mental (psychological) conditions affect driving: stress, emotions, attitude, anger, and impatience.
- Characteristics of a good defensive driver are: knowledge, alertness, foresight, judgment, and skills.

The conditions of driving play an important part.

- Some conditions are: type of vehicle, light, weather, road condition, and traffic conditions.
- Safe stopping—always maintain a safe following distance.

Important Note: The source for this and additional driving safety information is the National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course Guide Book.

Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.