

## DEFENSIVE DRIVING TIPS

Operating a motor vehicle may be one of the riskiest things an employee can do. Unsafe driving practices and collisions can lead to loss of life, serious injury and/or economic repercussions. By practicing defensive driving techniques you can avoid collisions and help lower your risk behind the wheel.

If you've been out on the roads, you know that not everyone drives well. Some people speed aggressively while others may wander into another lane because they aren't paying attention. Drivers may follow too closely, make sudden turns without signaling, or weave in and out of traffic.

You can't control the actions of other drivers however by updating your defensive driving skills you can learn how to avoid the hazards caused by other people's bad driving. By learning and practicing the principles of defensive driving you will be prepared to prevent collisions in spite of the actions or inactions of others.

Defensive driving involves the use of these three basic principles:

**Eye Lead Time** – allows a driver to anticipate hazards so that they can react before a collision occurs.

- Keep your eyes moving scanning the front, side and behind of your vehicle
- In urban areas scan the road 12 seconds ahead
- On the highway scan the road as far as your eye can see
- Check the rear view mirror every 3 seconds

**Stopping Distance** - The Stopping distance of a vehicle is the distance it takes to come to a standstill from the time you identify the need to stop.

- Perception time – the time it takes for a driver to recognize the need to stop
- Reaction time – the time it takes a driver to move their foot to the brake pedal
- Braking distance – is how far the vehicle travels from the moment the brakes are applied until the vehicle stops

**Following Distance** - Leaving enough room between you and the vehicle ahead can help you avoid a collision. A safe following distance ensures you'll have the time to react if the person in front of you slams on their brakes or swerves unexpectedly.

- Under normal driving conditions most passenger vehicles should follow vehicles in front by at least 3 seconds
- Add 1 second for each additional 3 metres of vehicle length (pulling a trailer)

If you're interested in taking a defensive driving course to help sharpen your driving knowledge and skills, contact RSA Risk Control Services or the Canada Safety Council at [www.canadasafetycouncil.org](http://www.canadasafetycouncil.org)