

# Dangerous or aggressive driving

How it will affect you and the society?

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**Aggressive driving** can be extremely dangerous. Zipping in and out of lanes, thinking you are going to get to your destination much quicker leads to one of few things. At best, you get where you're going five percent faster. That's only three minutes over an hour's driving, hardly worth the risk or the extra fuel. Another possibility is getting stuck in traffic ahead and all the cars you passed catch up with you. The third one is the biggest problem, which is that you cause an accident.

## **Why It Happens**

Aggressive driving can be triggered by several different things. Usually, it is onset by the littlest of incidents. All it takes is someone not allowing you to get over, or a car that is going very slow in front of you. Cutting people off seems to be the number one cause, and something that simple, can cause aggressive and reckless driving. One act may cause a long period of aggressive driving, and maybe even create a permanent behavior for that driver. This can be extremely dangerous to the driver, their passengers, other drivers and pedestrians.

## **What Occurs**

There are many different forms of aggressive driving. Typical things include flashing your headlights to the car in front of you to speed up, changing lanes without signaling, tailgating, blowing your horn and the list goes on. Disregarding traffic symbols and signals is common, such as running red lights or stop signs. This is not safe driving behavior, and also selfish. There is a total disregard for other driver's safety by you driving recklessly.

## **Consequences**

Aggressive driving can have a very bad outcome. It can easily lead to a vehicular homicide because the driver was driving negligently. Aggressive driving includes speeding, and this greatly increases your risk of getting into an accident, or getting a very serious ticket. The accident can lead to the deaths of individuals involved, as well as yourself. If you are lucky enough not to get into an accident, you can still get a heavy ticket, which if you have had offenses previously, could result in the loss or suspension of your license. Aggressive driving can also lead to hitting a pedestrian, or multiple pedestrians.

Overall, aggressive driving is a very serious issue. Studies have shown that almost 25 percent of drivers have admitted to driving aggressively. It can have very serious consequences on themselves and the other drivers on the road.

## **What Do You Learn in an Aggressive Driving Course?**

Whether imposed by a court or initiated on your own, signing up to learn defensive driving strategies should improve your road safety. Courses vary, but they incorporate learning the psychology of yourself and others and changing behavior accordingly.

### **Recognition**

Aggressive driving courses teach students to recognize the signs of risky driving including excessive honking, following too closely, and challenging other vehicles and dangerous lane changes. Many course participants have already exhibited the signs and received a court order to take a course. Classes instruct students to recognize bad driving habits in themselves and others. You learn to separate the dangerous driving of others from your responsibility to maintain self-control.

### **Role Playing**

Classes may include group exercises where participants put themselves in the place of aggressive drivers and other drivers reacting to them. This helps people understand the human aspect of anonymous drivers around them. Most people have the same needs and stresses of life, but some express them inappropriately behind the wheel. Behavior modification is the next step.

### **Behavior Modification**

Part of solving aggressive driving consists of mental changes and part involves physical changes. Students learn to focus on their mental state and perform calming techniques, such as counting to 10. Physical changes include improving your vehicle's comfort, like having favorite music or even stuffed animals with you. Drivers will also find that changing daily routines, like leaving earlier or later to avoid peak traffic, can foster a calmer driving trip. Some people don't realize the hazards resulting from habits like tailgating. Explaining the laws of physics to the student helps the pupil realize that following vehicles at certain speeds and distances may prevent stopping in time to avoid a collision.

### **Do Advanced Driving Lessons Affect the Price of Auto Insurance?**

Advanced driving lessons can affect the price of auto insurance by reducing your premiums. Taught by high performance driving schools, they provide a way to learn advanced skills that should improve your driving experience. Improvements in your driving abilities mean fewer accidents and tickets for speeding, which should lead to an overall reduction in your insurance premiums or rates. If you're presented with an opportunity to take an advanced driving lesson to improve your driving skills, you should consider the opportunity seriously.

Insurance companies look at the proactive steps that motorists take to improve their driving and reduce their exposure to risks that will result in an insurance claim. Advanced driving lessons are one of those proactive steps available to a motorist that can lead to lower risk exposure to the insurance company, and result in lower insurance costs.

### **Advanced Driving Lessons**

Advanced driving lessons offered through a high performance driving school, such as those sponsored by NASCAR or a Skip Barber driving school; emphasize skills to help you become a better driver. Many times these schools are portrayed as a way to learn how to drive faster and compete on a professional racing car circuit. This is far from the reality of most advanced driving lessons. The courses are structured to expose drivers to different aspects of the driving experience, including defensive driving skills and ways to improve safety by understanding how the car performs and works.

### **Discounts Available for Advanced Driving Lessons**

Your insurance agent or the company that you purchased the policy from should be able to show you which companies offer discounts for taking an advanced driving lesson. If your current insurer does not provide this type of discount, you may consider changing your coverage to a company that provides this type of rate reduction. The savings in your auto insurance premiums may be enough to justify taking the course.

### **Benefits from Advanced Driving Lessons**

The obvious benefit you can receive from advanced driving lessons is the improvement in your driving skills, making you a better and more conscientious driver. The skills you are taught should mean that you understand how to operate the car in a safe manner that will result in fewer auto accidents and fewer insurance claims filed. This lowers costs and makes driving better for everyone on the road. This benefit carries over to the reduction in your auto insurance rates.

The costs and other fees associated with an advanced driving lesson can be paid for over time by the reduction in your insurance premiums. The effect that advanced driving lessons have on your auto insurance price should be looked into with your insurance company, or with an insurance company that provides discounts.

Aggressive driving is but one aspect of the larger set of problems related to impaired, dangerous, and irresponsible vehicle use. This guide is limited to addressing the particular harms aggressive driving

creates. Related problems not directly addressed in this guide, each of which requires separate analysis, include:

- Drunken and impaired driving,
- Reckless driving,
- Joyriding,
- Speeding,
- Street racing,
- Unlicensed driving,
- Hit-and-run crashes,
- Red-signal and stop-sign violations, and
- Inattentive driving.

Aggressive driving refers to dangerous driving that disregards safety and courtesy. The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration defines aggressive driving as occurring "when individuals commit a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property." Driving behaviors that commonly constitute aggressive driving include:

- Speeding,
- Racing,
- Frequently changing lanes,
- Cutting off other drivers,
- Failing to signal,
- Running red lights,
- Failing to yield,
- Tailgating,
- Slowing rapidly to discourage a tailgater, and
- Boxing other cars in and using other intimidation maneuvers.

Aggressive driving behaviors are frequent and often include very dangerous actions. Currently available deterrents appear to have limited impact in our congested area. Inadequate resources for enforcement and limited public awareness may be partially responsible. We have adopted a multidisciplinary approach to this serious problem including public education, stepped-up enforcement, and psychological treatments.

## **Bibliography**

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