**Aggressive Driving and Road Rage Toolbox Talk**

The incidence of road rage and aggressive driving is on the increase with regular news reports of drivers who have been verbally abused or intimidated by other drivers, and in a small number of cases seriously harmed by another driver.

Aggressive drivers feel superior to other drivers and think they ‘own the road’ giving no thought to the safety of themselves, other drivers, passengers or pedestrians. Such drivers, who are invariably male, suffer already from high levels of anger, stress and frustration in their lives and they take these emotions with them whenever they get into a vehicle and drive.

Typical behaviour of an aggressive driver is to take high risks by:

* exceeding the road speed limit
* overtaking or undertaking dangerously
* failing to signal to change lanes or turn off the road
* refusing to give other drivers the right of way
* tailgating
* disregarding traffic lights at junctions

At the time a driver has ‘road rage’ they can feel liberated while they vent their frustrations out on other drivers, but the benefits are short lived and outweighed by the consequences that include:

* raised blood pressure and heart rate
* heated argument or physical fighting
* potential damage to vehicles
* injuries and on occasion deaths can occur
* getting a criminal record
* being given a prison sentence
* increased car insurance costs

Road rage is an extremely dangerous situation often resulting in physical attack. It is not always possible to diffuse a road rage situation, as some drivers will be aggressive in their response no matter what you do to stay calm.

Keep in mind that sometimes a driver’s behaviour may appear aggressive but is in fact unintentional bad driving because the driver is tired or not focusing on the road, such as forgetting to signal for lane changing.

# Coping with a Road Rage driver

1. If another driver threatens you in any way, pulls alongside your vehicle or tries to distract you, always avoid eye contact.
2. If another driver honks their horn at you never retaliate. Your horn is there only to get other driver’s attention and let them know that you are there.
3. Pull off the road to safety but keep your door locked and the engine running in case you need to drive off. Ideally park in a public place for safety.
4. If you are ever followed by another vehicle memorise their registration number and any useful details about the vehicle or driver. Report the incident to the Police and your company as soon as possible.

In the event of a vehicle collision or if you are put in a situation where it is necessary to confront another driver whom you feel is at fault, be thoughtful in your approach. Consider your message and how to deliver it so as not to escalate the

situation always leave emotions out of such discussions. Be factual with your words and avoid direct blame. Keep your own irritation under control and practice deep breathing to stay composed. Always wait for Emergency Services to arrive when in doubt of the other driver’s reaction and stay in your vehicle if you feel threatened.

**Key points to remember**

* Be aware of your own safety if confronted by an angry driver, and follow the guidance to stay safe
* Contact the Police if you feel threatened by or followed by another vehicle
* Remember not all drivers displaying poor driving habits are doing so due to road rage, give drivers the benefit of the doubt at first

# Drivers’ discussion questions

1. Have you ever witnessed or been involved in a road rage or abusive driving incident? How did it make you feel?
2. Have you ever felt angry with another driver? How did this affect your driving? (Read and discuss the Stress Management Toolbox Talk for guidance)

Comments:

Date:

Meeting conducted by:

# Attendees

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