

#3649

ROAD RAGE AND AGGRESSIVE DRIVING: A VIEW FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Grade Levels: 9-13+

19 minutes

AIMS MULTIMEDIA 1998

DESCRIPTION

What is road rage? Who are these drivers and why do they get so angry? What can be done to avoid road rage? How can a person be protected against this behavior? Identifies some aggressive actions that lead to road rage and stresses the consequences. Conveys practical suggestions to avoid being a target or an aggressor. You can't always control traffic situations, but you can control your reactions to them.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject: Behavioral Sciences

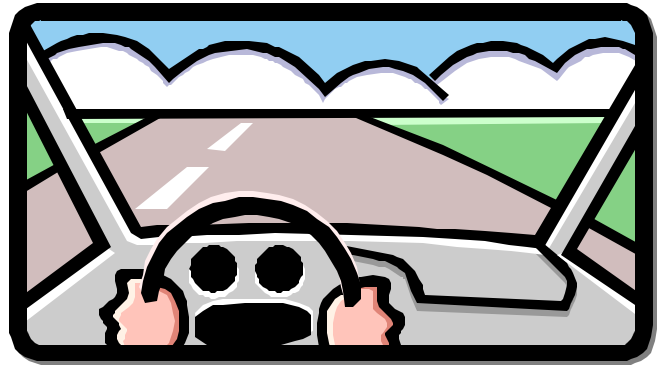
- ◆ Standard: Understands various meanings of "social group," general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function
 - Benchmark: Understands that people often like or dislike other people because of membership in or exclusion from a particular social group
 - Benchmark: Understands that members of a group and even people in a crowd sometimes do and say things, good or bad, that they would not do or say on their own

Subject: Health

- ◆ Standard: Understands the relationship of family health to individual health
 - Benchmark: Knows characteristics needed to be a responsible friend and family member (e.g., participating in family activities, assuming more responsibility for household tasks)
 - Benchmark: Knows how health-related problems impact the whole family
- ◆ Standard: Knows how to maintain mental and emotional health
 - Benchmark: Knows strategies to manage stress and feelings caused by disappointment, separation, or loss (e.g., talking over problems with others, understanding that feelings of isolation and depression will pass, examining the situation leading to the feelings)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To discuss the destructive driving behaviors known as road rage and aggressive driving.
2. To make drivers aware of the high cost of road rage incidents in terms of lives lost, serious injuries, and financial and legal consequences.
3. To make motorists aware of the types of driving mistakes likely to frustrate and anger other drivers.
4. To provide guidelines that will assist motorists in avoiding aggressive driving behaviors themselves and avoid provoking road rage in other drivers.



BEFORE SHOWING

1. What is road rage?
2. What behaviors behind the wheel would you consider to be aggressive driving?
3. If a driver becomes frustrated by traffic conditions or the behavior of other motorists, what are some acceptable ways to channel that frustration?
4. How often do you engage in aggressive driving?

AFTER SHOWING

1. A recent six-year study revealed 10,037 incidents of angry drivers doing what? (Deliberately trying to injure or kill another motorist.)
2. Who are the drivers that erupt into road rage behavior? (They can be anyone--male, female, young or old. Often they are motorists who are usually law-abiding but, when enraged by a traffic grievance, explode into violent behavior.)
3. Drivers who cause road rage incidents harm not only their victims but also themselves and their families. How? (Road rage incidents are not simple traffic offenses. They are criminal offenses which may result in arrest and a jail sentence, increased insurance rates, possible loss of driving privileges and employment, as well as civil lawsuits brought by victims and their families.)
4. Not all instances of aggressive driving or road rage result in property damage and bodily harm. What consequence of road rage and its media coverage did the program indicate affects all drivers? (Road rage has extracted a psychological toll from motorists, making them anxious and frightened. Many now consider it a larger concern than motorists driving under the influence.)
5. What are some of the factors that may contribute to aggressive or violent behavior by drivers? (Stress, frustration, crowded traffic situations, being insulated by our vehicles so we are not face to face with other drivers.)



6. What are some unsafe driving behaviors that may trigger a violent response from other motorists? (tailgating; blocking lanes; high-beaming other cars; changing lanes without signaling; honking; making rude gestures at another driver)
7. What are some safe driving techniques all drivers can use to avoid conflict on the road? (Keep your eyes on the road, pay attention, use turn signals, don't tailgate or block lanes. Pull over if your vehicle is holding up traffic, don't overuse the horn. In parking lots, look when backing up, don't take someone else's space, and don't hit vehicle doors. Be courteous even when others aren't.)
8. If you are confronted by a driver who is driving erratically or in an aggressive way, what are some things you should do? (If the driver attempts to confront you, get out of the way and do not return hostility; avoid eye contact or gestures. Lock doors and close windows. If followed, find police or sheriff deputies. Report aggressive driving or road rage to the authorities.)
9. How might you avoid driving in an aggressive manner yourself, or indulging in road rage behavior if another motorist makes mistakes that may frustrate you? (Avoid driving when upset or extremely tired. Avoid rush-hour traffic whenever possible. Plan routes and take a map along. Allow plenty of time for the trip. Obey traffic laws and assume that any mistakes made by other drivers are not intentional. Stay calm and relaxed. On a long trip, take periodic rest breaks.)

SUMMARY

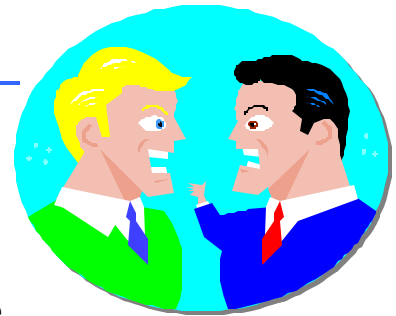
It has become an all-too-common announcement in our television newscasts and newspaper headline..."Motorist attacked in an incident of road rage."

What is road rage? It is deliberate, violent behavior on the part of a driver in response to a traffic grievance. An enraged driver may target another vehicle because he or she feels "wronged" by the other motorist.

The driver who erupts into this kind of abusive action may be anyone--male, female, young or old. He or she may be someone who usually obeys all the traffic laws, but one day just snaps, becoming uncontrollably enraged in response to something as minor as being cut off in traffic or being honked at by another driver.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found in a recent six-year study that there had been over 10,000 reported incidents in which an angry driver deliberately tried to injure or kill another motorist. Those incidents resulted in the deaths of 218 people and serious injuries to 12,610 individuals.

Where the road rage driver may normally be a law-abiding motorist, the aggressive driver routinely shows little concern for traffic regulations or other motorists. Aggressive drivers are more likely to speed, to run red lights and stop



signs, or to tailgate. Their high-risk driving may trigger road rage behavior from other motorists, and aggressive drivers may themselves erupt into road rage if another motorist angers them.

There are a number of safe driving techniques motorists can use to avoid confrontations with aggressive drivers and to reduce the likelihood of provoking road rage in others. These techniques include:

1. Pay attention to your driving and keep your eyes on the road.
2. Do not tailgate.
3. Use turn signals.
4. Do not block the passing lane.
5. If you're holding up traffic, pull over.
6. In parking lots, look before backing up, don't steal spaces or hit other vehicles with your door.
7. Be courteous even when others aren't.
8. Do not overuse your horn.
9. Keep the radio at a low or moderate level.
10. Assume other drivers' mistakes aren't intentional.
11. If confronted by an aggressive or violent driver: get out of the way; don't return hostility; avoid eye contact and obscene or threatening gestures.
12. Drive with doors locked and windows closed.
13. Leave space between yourself and the vehicle ahead.
14. If an aggressive or violent person approaches your vehicle, don't get out.
15. If followed, drive to a police or sheriff's station or other location where help is available.
16. Report aggressive driving or road rage incidents to the authorities.
17. Avoid driving when tired or emotionally upset.
18. Prepare your vehicle: clean the windshield, adjust driver's seat and climate controls.
19. If possible, avoid driving during rush hour.
20. Plan your route and allow plenty of time.
21. Stay calm and relaxed.
22. Drive cooperatively.
23. Apologize in a confrontation with another driver, even if you feel you are in the right.



RELATED RESOURCES

Captioned Media Program

- Citizens' Guide to Safe Driving #7914
- Defensive Driving Tactics (Third Edition) #2273
- Stress Reduction Strategies That Really Work! #7665



World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid-safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **ROAD RAGE VERSUS DEFENSIVE DRIVERS**

<http://www.roadragers.com/>

Suggestions for how to drive around "road ragers," and other topics that relate to the video.

- **ROAD RAGE AND AGGRESSIVE DRIVING**

<http://www.aloha.net/~dyc/rr.html>

An online textbook from two British Ph.D.s. An easy read. Background, definitions, suggestions, and more.

- **ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

<http://www.recovery-man.com/abusive/abusive.htm>

Signs and signals within a relationship that may indicate abuse or the potential for violence. Aggression in the form of accidents and incidents. See related "rage" pages, and "healthy versus abusive" relationship checklist notes.

**Driving friendly
is the best
defense!**

