

Road Rage (Motor Vehicle Safety) Meeting Kit



Aggressive driving has been a problem on our roadways for a while, and it seems to only be getting worse. Incidents of screaming, rude gestures, and sometimes even violence are reported frequently on our roadways to the point where it has earned its own name: road rage.

ROAD RAGE – DEFINITION

There can be a multitude of factors that contribute to a motor vehicle accident. One single unsafe act or unsafe condition can be enough to cause an accident. Often times there are multiple unsafe acts and conditions that lead to a motor vehicle accident. One common unsafe act is taking part in “road rage” activities.

WHAT IS ROAD RAGE?

Everyone has heard the term road rage and most people have probably experienced some degree of it while driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration defines road rage as when a driver “commits moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property; an assault with a motor vehicle or other dangerous weapon by the operator or passenger of one motor vehicle on the operator or passengers of another motor vehicle”.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AGGRESSIVE DRIVING AND ROAD RAGE

The terms “aggressive driving” and “road rage” are often used interchangeably. However, while road rage contains many of the same features as aggressive driving, the differences between the two terms lies in the intent.

Aggressive driving is the commission of one or more traffic offenses, often while the driver is in a hurry.

Road rage is considered a societal condition in which a motorist loses his or her temper, generally in response to a traffic condition. The term road rage was coined by a Los Angeles news station in response to a series of roadside shootings that were occurring on freeways throughout the city.

PREVENT ROAD RAGE AND DEAL WITH CONFRONTATION

- Maintain adequate following distance.
- Use turn signals.
- Allow others to merge.

- Use your high beams responsibly.
- Tap your horn if you must (but no long blasts with accompanying hand gestures).
- Be considerate in parking lots. Park in one spot, not across multiple spaces. Be careful not to hit cars next to you with your door.

If you find yourself dealing with an angry or an aggressive driver try the following:

- Avoid eye contact with angry drivers.
- Don't respond with aggression towards the angry driver.
- If you feel you are at risk, drive to a public place.
- Use your horn to attract attention but remain in your locked vehicle.
- If you are confronted, stay as calm and courteous as possible.
- If you feel threatened, call 911.

STEPS FOR ROAD SAFETY

- Always use a seat belt on every trip, no matter how short and no matter if you are seated in the front or the back of a vehicle.
- Make sure children are always properly buckled in the back seat in a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt that is appropriate for their age, height, and weight.
- Always wear a helmet when driving or riding on motorcycles, motorbikes, or bicycles.
- Do not drive while impaired by alcohol or drugs, and avoid riding with a driver who is impaired.
- Obey speed limits.
- Drive without distractions. For example, don't use a cell phone or text while driving.
- Be alert when crossing streets, especially in countries where motorists drive on the left side of the road.
- Ride only in marked/official taxis or ride share vehicles. Try to ride in taxis or ride share vehicles that have seat belts available in all seating positions.
- Avoid riding in overcrowded, overweight, or top-heavy buses or minivans.

FINAL WORD

The terms "aggressive driving" and "road rage" are often used interchangeably. But the difference is the intent: Road Rage is classified as a willful and wanton disregard for others safety.