

# Safety Bugle

## Today's Topic: Road Rage



### Road Rage is the Wrong Way

You know aggressive drivers, who weave in and out of traffic, drive too fast on crowded highways, tailgate, scream at you or use obscene gestures. They are a new kind of road hazard. Let's face it... at one time or another; everyone has been angry while driving. In today's hectic, fast-paced world, it's easy to become frustrated, and increasingly people express their anger when driving. How can you avoid the consequences of road rage?



### What causes it?

**Personal Stress** - Life stress at work or home may lead to more angry responses to impolite or unaware drivers. Most "road rage" occurs during the evening rush-hour period (3-6 pm).

**Personality** - Anxious persons, suppress their anger, and express their anger in a less controlled way - The Type A personality.

### Other reasons for Road Rage

- The weather.
- Congested roads.
- Car as a safe space to express anger.
- Experience with driving.
- Bad habits learned from parents.

### Did You Know?

The most obvious form of road rage is aggressive and excessive speeding, particularly on congested highways or in bad weather. Speed causes nearly one-third of all fatal motor vehicle crashes. Speeding reduces the time drivers have to avoid a crash or a dangerous situation and greatly increases the likelihood the crash will be severe. The energy released in a collision at 60 mph is 200 percent greater than at 40 mph, even though the speed has increased by only 50 percent.

### Control Yourself

- Wind down before you crank it up. Avoid making other drivers angry by avoiding anger yourself.
- Anticipate situations and make plans accordingly. Regular traffic reports in most cities alert you to the traffic congestion. Learn alternate routes or leave for work earlier.
- Take action before stress and fatigue get to you. Learn to spot warning signs and act on them.
- If you plan a long journey, take it in stages. Do not remain behind the wheel for more than three hours without a break.
- Vehicles should be given a checkup before embarking on any long journey; a stalled vehicle can cause frayed nerves.
- Weather can be tricky at times; be prepared.

- If you are new to a place, don't take the lead at traffic signals.
- Avoid zigzag driving at all costs.

### Be Patient & Pay Attention

- Don't yell or use obscene gestures.
- Don't block the passing lane. Stay to the right if you are obstructing the flow of traffic.
- Always signal when changing lanes. Use your horn sparingly.
- Don't tailgate.
- Cooperate and don't compete on the road. Let other drivers merge into traffic in an orderly fashion.
- Don't take another's actions personally. Everybody makes mistakes.

### Avoid A Driving Assault

- Don't react to another driver's uncivil behavior--avoid eye contact and don't tailgate, accelerate, brake or swerve suddenly, which can be seen as confrontational.
- Go to the nearest police station if you continue to be hassled or think you are being followed, or if confronted by an aggressive driver.
- Lock your doors.
- When stopped in traffic, leave enough space to pull out from behind the car you are following.
- Don't be tempted to start a fight or carry any sort of weapon. These acts may provoke an assault.

### How to fight road stress?

- Always be prepared for other people to drive erratically--all drivers are human.
- Be tolerant--aggression and anger are bad for you; accept traffic jams as a fact of life.
- Channel your aggression elsewhere- don't honk the moment the light changes color.
- Drive less if you dislike being at the steering wheel often--use other modes of transport from time to time.
- Enjoy some soft music on your car stereo to soothe your frayed nerves.
- Forget other problems when you are at the wheel.
- Have patience- remember a few seconds will not make much difference to your overall journey time.
- Know the rules for merging in thoroughfares and take turns.
- Late hours driving- do not honk your horn continuously--allow yourself time to react--driver ahead of you could be drunk or sleepy and tired or all of them.
- Master relaxation techniques, these come in handy in traffic jams.
- Never allow your mood, emotions and attitudes to take over.
- Quick decisions could save you from many problems--remain alert to your surroundings.
- While turning, give way to pedestrians.
- Use your vehicle only if absolutely necessary.