

Driving While Angry is Dangerous

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

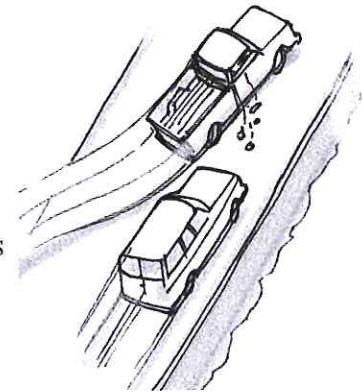
- Aggressive driving may result in violence, even death.
- Know how to reduce your risk of being targeted by an angry driver.
- Don't get behind the wheel of a car, truck, tractor-trailer, or other equipment such as a forklift if you are angry.



Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

Driving while angry can lead to violence

- You may have heard the term “road rage.” Road rage refers to drivers who get aggressive behind the wheel of a car, truck, tractor-trailer or other vehicle.
- Unfortunately, road rage is becoming more and more common. Studies show an average of at least 1,500 men, women and children are killed or injured each year as a result of aggressive driving.
- Angry drivers of cars, trucks, buses, tractor-trailers and other vehicles have used their vehicles to intentionally crash into someone else.
- Angry drivers may also:
 - make obscene gestures;
 - run stop signs and red lights;
 - tailgate other vehicles;
 - weave in and out of traffic;
 - pass on the right;
 - cut off other drivers;
 - hurl objects at other drivers;
 - honk their horns, scream, or flash their lights;
 - get out of their vehicles to pick a fight;
 - or even pull a knife or gun and wound or kill another driver.



Angry drivers may cut you off or hurl objects at your vehicle.

What causes aggressive driving?

- Any one of us can become an aggressive driver if we let our anger become more important to us than safe driving.
- If you are angry about an incident at work, or a person or issue outside of work, don't get behind the wheel of a vehicle — or any other potentially dangerous equipment such as a forklift or skid-steer loader.
- Instead, let your supervisor know, and take some time to cool off.
- Some aggressive drivers have emotional or mental disorders. Others are impaired by alcohol or other drugs.
- Even some prescription drugs may affect driving ability.



Don't get behind the wheel of dangerous machinery when you are angry.

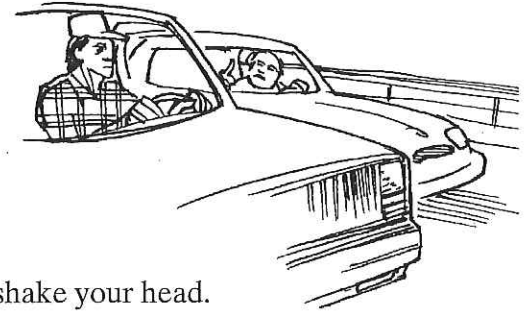
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Tips on dealing with angry drivers

1. Keep your cool. Be patient and courteous to other drivers. Refuse to engage if another driver tries to pick a fight.
2. Don't tailgate. Maintain a safe distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you. If you think the vehicle in front of you is going too slow and you're unable to pass, pull back and allow more space – not less. This will give you a means of escape if the driver does something unexpected.
3. Always signal when you turn or change lanes. And don't cut another driver off when you move over.
4. Avoid eye contact with an aggressive driver.
5. Ignore obscene gestures. Don't gesture back. Try not to even shake your head.
6. Don't honk your horn at an angry driver. Avoid using your horn while driving unless it's an emergency.
7. Wear your seat belt. This will help protect you in the event of a crash.
8. Don't get out of your vehicle and keep your doors locked. Also, don't pull off to the side of the road to try to "settle" things with an angry driver.
9. Get help. If an aggressive driver is following you, drive to a public place such as a police station, convenience store or even a hospital. In this case, it is OK to blow your horn to get someone's attention when you get there. Or, if you have a cellular phone, use it to call police.
10. Report aggressive drivers to police as soon as possible.



Avoid eye contact with angry drivers.

Reducing your own anger

- All of us get angry at some time or another. But if you find yourself getting angry a lot, you may want to consider professional help.
- Your supervisor, our safety or human resources director, or another manager can help you locate an outside counselor or other source of help.
- It's also important to remember to relax, both on and off the road. This will help reduce the stress that may result in angry driving.
- Lastly, if possible, change your driving habits or your schedule to avoid the worst traffic congestion. That will help reduce your stress.



Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the **Angry Driving Do's and Don'ts**.

ANGRY DRIVING DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Avoid eye contact with an angry driver.
- Know how to safely get out of the way of an aggressive driver.
- Seek help if you get angry a lot or are unable to control angry outbursts.

DON'T:

- Get behind the wheel of a car, truck, tractor-trailer or other vehicle or equipment when you are angry.
- Get out of your vehicle to "settle" things with an angry driver.
- Follow another vehicle too closely, or leave insufficient room when changing lanes.

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