PARSONS Safety Campaign

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Defensive Driving

Each year, millions of people are injured or killed in car accidents around the world. Cars may make crossing distance more convenient, but they also make traveling more dangerous. Follow these tips to improve your driving habits and to learn how to avoid bad drivers.

Driving Safely

As a driver, you have a responsibility to follow traffic laws and drive attentively—for your own protection, and for the safety of those who share the road.

- **Always stop for pedestrians.** Crosswalks are often provided at major intersections and crossways, but that doesn't mean people always use them. Always scan for pedestrians who are crossing the road. If someone appears to be stepping off the sidewalk, be prepared to stop. A few seconds wasted on waiting for someone to cross the street is not much compared to a lifetime of regret.
- **Leave enough room for bikers.** Unless otherwise specified, bikers have just as much right to use the road as you do. Because cyclists are more vulnerable and do not have much armor to protect them in an accident, you should yield to them. Most bikers will use hand signals before making turns or changing lanes, but some may not. If you spot a cyclist, drive as far from him/her as possible, changing lanes if you have to. Because of their smaller size, they can easily get lost in your blind spot.
- **Stop completely at stop signs.** Stop means stop, not yield. Stop signs are placed at intersections to give pedestrians and drivers enough time to notice each other and to safely share the road. By not stopping completely at a stop sign, you don't give yourself enough time to check all four directions before proceeding. Always look left, right, then left again for other road users before driving through a four-way intersection.
- **Don't follow too closely.** Leaving enough space between your car and the car in front of you gives you enough time to safely detect and react to a hazard, or if the car in front of you suddenly breaks. Following a car too closely increases your risk of rear-ending the car in front if you don't apply the brake in time, or if the car behind rear-ends your car and sandwiches you in a chain collision.
- **Wear your seatbelt.** Different places have different rules for seatbelt usage, but you should wear your seatbelts regardless. Seatbelts are provided for your safety and only take a few seconds to fasten. If you transport children, please follow your region's seatbelt requirements for minors.
- **Look ahead.** Always scan ahead for hazards—the farther, the better. By scanning well ahead of your immediate pathway, you give yourself enough time

to react to an upcoming hazard, such as a fallen branch or a child stepping into the street.

- **Be in a good physical condition to drive.** To operate a two-ton-plus machine, you should be mentally and physically prepared. If you're feeling emotionally distressed, under the weather, or drowsy from medication, you're not in a safe condition to drive; ask a family member or a friend to drive you instead.
- **Use headlights when appropriate.** Because you share the road with bicyclists, pedestrians, and other drivers, turn on your low-beam headlights when it is too dim, dark, foggy, or rainy to see clearly. Only use high-beam headlights as specified in your city's regulations.
- **Yellow means yield.** If you approach an intersection at a yellow light, be prepared to stop. Speeding through an intersection is unsafe and may lead to a collision with adjacent or turning traffic.
- **Watch out for animals and children.** Children and animals are hard to spot because they are unpredictable. Both can run into a street unexpectedly. Slow down when driving near children or animals. In some regions, it is illegal to leave injured animals on the road.

Driving Defensively

You may follow all traffic laws, but that doesn't mean everyone else does. To increase your safety while driving, you must be able to avoid the carelessness and mistakes other drivers make. Not all drivers drive poorly because they're distracted; some are aggressive, some are drunk, and some are physically impaired. Here are some tips on how to spot and react to different types of drivers:

- **Slow drivers.** Drivers who drive slowly are often elderly drivers who have difficulty reacting to traffic signals and to their surroundings. Do not tailgate a slow driver. When it is safe to do so, simply change lanes.
- **Zigzagging drivers.** Drivers who swerve between lanes are often distracted or drunk; these drivers are dangerous because they may not be able to see you if you attempt to pass them. Pull over and park where it is safe and legal to do so and wait until the driver is out of sight. If you think the driver is a danger to others, call the police while you are safely parked.
- **Speedy drivers.** Speed demons are common, especially in heavily trafficked areas where road rage is common. These drivers tend to weave between lanes and ignore speed limits, putting themselves and other drivers at risk. If a speedy driver tries to pass you, let him/her get ahead of you. Confronting a speedy driver may lead to road rage.

Follow the golden rule: always drive attentively and yield to others, especially pedestrians, even if you have the right-of-way. A phone call or a few wasted seconds is a small matter compared to your own safety and the safety of others.

Your Safety, Our Passion!