

Safe driving is not only a reaction to hazards, but also the recognition of potential hazards. That means seeing situations for what they could become as well as what they are. Good drivers are vigilant, constantly evaluating the driving environment in anticipation of the unexpected. They remain in control of the situation. Driving requires a person's full attention. Drivers must remain aware and alert at all times.

Securitas encourages everyone to improve their driving skills and knowledge. Resources for this can be found at many public libraries, auto clubs and motor vehicle agencies. Such resources can provide sound advice like the following tips:



## Plan your route

Familiarize yourself with your route. Tune into a local media source to stay informed about weather, road and traffic conditions on your route. For longer trips, include a rest stop every two hours. Stop sooner if you are tired.



## Maintain your vehicle

Read the owner's manual and follow the recommended schedule for routine service maintenance. Conduct your own routine check-ups on: tyres, brakes, headlights, taillights, turn signals, wipers, and fluid levels before a trip. Improve visibility by making sure mirrors, windows and outside lights are clean. Secure all cargo and loose items.



## Focus your attention

Being well rested, alert and attentive improves responsiveness. Take a break if you have difficulty in focusing. Always remain calm and don't let anger or frustration cause you to act recklessly.



## Know your surroundings

Scan the roadway continually for hazards. Know what is happening well ahead of you. Watch for brake lights, and check all your mirrors regularly. Be aware of what is happening on all sides of your vehicle.



## Share your space

You share the road with different types of drivers and vehicles. Be aware of the special needs and limitations of other vehicles and roadway users.



## Watch your speed

Adjust your speed for traffic, road and visibility conditions. Higher speeds magnify errors and limit the time available to identify and react to a hazard. Stopping distances are longer and crashes are more severe.



## Keep your distance

Leave sufficient space to change lanes safely and take evasive action in emergencies. Keeping a safe distance between vehicles increases your ability to see and to be seen by other drivers.



## Signal your intentions

Be courteous; signal your intentions by always using your turn signals to indicate a lane change or a turn. Don't hesitate to use your horn or headlights to establish eye contact, if needed. Express your thanks, with a wave of the hand or a flash of the lights.



## Always wear your seat belt

Seat belts are your best defense in a crash, and wearing one is the law. In vehicles equipped with seat belts, seat belts must be worn at all times by the driver and passengers. Being properly secured keeps you in control of your vehicle and ready to react to a hazardous situation. Buckle up and make sure your passengers do the same. Seat belts save lives!



## Minimize your distractions

Keep your hands on the wheel, your eyes on the road and your mind on the task of driving. Do not let people, objects or events inside or outside your vehicle distract you.



## Texting while driving

Cell phones and texting continue to contribute to numerous accidents, as texting while driving increases the likelihood of a person being involved in an accident by 23 times. This is equivalent to driving blind for 5 seconds at a time, during which time the vehicle would travel the length of a football field, if traveling 80 km per hour.



## Drive to distraction

The most common cause of car accidents is distracted driving. A distracted driver might be trying to find a music station or texting on a cell phone. Distractions also come from outside the car. A person who turns to glare at a distracted driver, or who slows down to gawk at a near accident is equally, or potentially more, distracted.

The largest study to date on distracted drivers shows that more accidents are caused by drivers who are rubbernecking than by drivers who were distracted by passengers, fine tuning their radios, using cell phones or texting. To reduce the risk of an accident, minimize distractions inside the car. Keep your hands on the wheel and focus your eyes and attention on the road.

Wearing a seat belt, slowing down, staying sober, keeping both hands on the wheel, staying focused on the road and being aware of all traffic around you will help prevent accidents and keep you safe while driving.