

# Driving Tips

- **Be Predictable!** This may be the most important thing you can do. You might not be able to see the crazy driver coming up behind you at 110 miles per hour, but if you're predictable, he can avoid you even when you can't avoid him. Even a terrible driver can avoid accidents by being predictable, because others can react and avoid the accident. Surprises lead to accidents. So avoid sudden stops, lane changes, etc.
- **Always use your *Blinker!*** Remember “Be Predictable”? This is part of being predictable. This can be a life and death situation. It is safe, it is courteous, it is the law. Do it.
- **Blink, *then* Brake.** Remember, “Be Predictable”! Braking first is not predictable – no one knows why you're braking. Put your blinker on first, then brake. Then those behind you will know why you're braking and they will believe your brake lights and be less likely to run into you.
- **Avoid Unnecessary Braking.** It seems that many people put their foot on the brake for nearly any reason, but often just for a second. This results in a quick flash of the brake lights, but no significant decrease in speed. Remember, “Be Predictable”? This crying “Wolf!” with fake braking tells other cars they can't trust your brake lights. They don't know whether you're really going to slow down, or are just tap happy. Consequently, they might not slow down the next time you actually do brake and then they'll run into you. Keep a safe distance, pay attention, and just let off the gas and coast initially instead of braking. It's OK not to have a foot on a pedal! Brake only when it's really needed. If you're braking a lot, you may be following too closely or accelerating too rapidly with obstacles ahead. Efficiency in braking is safer, more economical, and better for the environment.
- **Keep a Safe Distance, even Bumper to Bumper.** Remember the 2 second rule? If you drive in heavy traffic like in Dallas, there's no way to maintain such a distance. Someone will often move in between you and the next car if there's more than a car length available. So when you have to drive close, look to drive behind vehicles that you can see through. This way you can see what the cars ahead are doing, giving you more reaction time. If a visual block vehicle gets in front of you, give it more space until a better visibility vehicle slides in between.
- Continued...

## Driving Tips (continued)

- **Avoid changing lanes when** there is a parallel driver two lanes over. You can't tell if that driver will try to change lanes at the same time. (Drive in the left lane actually has right of way in that situation.)
- **Maintain Speed for Merging.** When you're in the right hand lane and someone is merging onto the highway, avoid significant slowdowns or speedups. In that case, you have the right-of-way and the merging person merging, ideally, is attempting to adjust speed for a smooth merge. If they are trying to match speed to merge behind you and you slow down, that creates confusion and increases danger, plus can disrupt the traffic flow behind you even if it is just a chain reaction of brake lights. If you and the merging vehicle speed up at the same time, it can have similar results. You probably shouldn't have to slow down – especially if it means using your brakes, or speed up unless there is a lot of traffic and the other person can't get in otherwise. However, on occasion a slight adjustment can help flow. Remember, “Be Predictable”? This works in merging, whether you're the merger or the one doing the accommodating. Be considerate.
- **Avoid Creating Roadblocks while Cruising.** Seemingly people will often hold up traffic on the highway, using their cruise control, as they take a long time to pass another vehicle that is going barely slower than they are. If you're not slowing anyone up, fine. Otherwise, just put your foot on the accelerator and speed up 3 or 4 miles an hour to get around the other vehicle and clear the lane again. Doing otherwise creates more dangerous driving conditions and is just not courteous.
- **Brake from Cruise Control at a Safe Distance.** People often will get dangerously close to another vehicle as they hope to avoid interrupting cruise control and get over in time. That cruise control interruption is a small inconvenience and well worth it to avoid the significant danger that comes without it. Since you are endangering others in that situation, it is also rude and selfish, and can frighten the driver ahead.
- **Be Considerate.** If someone blinks to get in, let them in. Don't speed up to cut them off. You want other drivers to be courteous to you. If ever in doubt, ask yourself, “What if every one did this?”.
- **Stay off the phone.** Most erratic or unpredictable driving is the result of cell phones. If you use your phone, drive slower than normal, keep a consistent pace. Be considerate and don't endanger others! If others can't tell you're on the phone based on your driving, fine. Otherwise... talk later (and especially text later).