3066 Defensive Driving Techniques
Training Program Course Outline

The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the course. The outline can be used to review the course before conducting a classroom session, as well as in preparing to lead a class discussion about the course.

• **Introduction**
  o You know how to drive safely, but do you make the choice to?

• **Minimizing Your Risk**
  o Motor Vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death of the American worker. The leading causes of collisions are:
    o Improper speed,
    o Following too close,
    o Driving While Intoxicated or Driving Under the Influence of Drugs or Alcohol, and
    o Failure to obey traffic signals.
  o Speeding results in 12,000 traffic deaths per year. For every 10 miles per hour over 50 mph you drive, the risk of death is doubled.
  o By following traffic safety laws, being aware, and using common sense, you can minimize your risk.

• **The Pre-trip Inspection**
  o Check in and around your vehicle, tire pressure and tread, and safety gauges before driving anywhere.

• **Seatbelts**
  o First things first, always wear your seatbelt. Wearing a seatbelt is the single most important thing you can do to protect yourself in the event of a crash.

• **Speed Limits**
If the sign says 55, how fast should you be traveling? Obvious … right?
Not necessarily. In inclement weather such as rain, snow or fog, the posted speed limit may not be safe. Slow down in inclement weather, and when the sun’s out, do the speed limit.

• **Following Distance**
  - It may take your vehicle longer to stop than you may think. For this reason, we recommend a minimum of a 3-second following distance in dry conditions.
  - Increase the following distance 1 second for each of the following conditions:
    - Adverse weather conditions
    - Heavy traffic
    - Following a truck
    - Night driving or poor visibility
    - Being tailgated
    - Driving while stressed or fatigued

• **Blind Spots and Mirrors**
  - Adjust your mirrors before you start your car and be aware of your blind spot at all times.

• **Intersections**
  - Intersections are responsible for over 50% of all accidents. When approaching intersections, scan to the left, then to the right, and back to the left, for vehicles that may run a stop sign or light or for pedestrians and bicyclists.
  - Remember, always leave yourself an out.
  - Anticipate what mistakes others may make and assume that they will make them!

• **Passing**
  - When passing:
    - Pull out into the oncoming lane and quickly accelerate, but do not exceed the speed limit.
    - Pull back into the lane when you can see the vehicle you just passed in your rear view mirror.
    - When passing a truck, increase the distance before pulling
back into your lane so that you can see in your rear view mirror the pavement between you and the truck.

**Adverse Weather Driving**
- Do not drive in adverse weather unless absolutely necessary.
- If you have to drive, keep windows clear of ice, snow, and fog.
- Use the “What If” strategy: always have a way out.
- Remember, shaded road areas may be icy and bridges and overpasses ice first in winter—proceed over these with caution.

**Distracted Driving—Email and Laptops**
- Distracted driving results in 1.4 million crashes a year and it is against company policy.
- If you’re the type of person who just can't resist, keep your computer closed and in the case. No more temptation and one less potential crash.

**Distracted Driving—Cell Phones**
- Drivers who use cell phones are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves or others.
- Even with a hands-free device, cell phone use reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%.
- If you need to talk to someone, pull over to a safe area, stop your car and talk.
- That way you take care of business but you don't put yourself or others at risk.
- The caller will appreciate it since you can now devote your full attention to them.

**Distracted Driving—Driving Tired**
- Studies have shown drowsy drivers’ exhibit the same increased reaction times and poor judgment as drivers who are *legally intoxicated*.
- The point is, get plenty of rest. You’ll do a better job and be a better driver.

**Safe Backing**
- If you must back up, before getting into the vehicle, walk around the vehicle to make sure there is nothing in the way before
backing.
  - Back slowly and carefully.

• **Accident Procedures**
  - If you are involved in a vehicle accident:
    - Never leave the scene.
    - Call emergency personnel if necessary.
    - Do not attempt to move an injured person unless there is a life threatening situation such as a fire and the occupant is unable to get out.
    - Do not admit guilt or discuss whose fault the accident was.
    - If your company has an accident reporting kit, make sure you use it.
    - Take photos of the accident scene showing vehicle locations, direction of travel, vehicle and other property damage, location of traffic control devices, the license plate of vehicles involved, etc.
    - Depending on state law, move your vehicle to the side of the road if there are no injuries and minor damage.
    - Obtain names and phone numbers of all involved parties and witnesses. Have witnesses write out what they saw.
    - Obtain insurance information of all parties involved (insurance company name, policy number, telephone number, expiration date, name of insured on the policy).
    - If police are on the scene, obtain police officers’ names, badge numbers, and the police report file number, and a police phone number.
    - Once you have gathered the required information, contact your supervisor.

• **Review and Conclusion**
  - You are in control of your vehicle.
  - Don’t give up control to your emotions or to other drivers.
  - Control your actions and how you deal with traffic, weather, and emotions.
  - It’s so important to use your common sense and good judgment at all times.

• **Seven Habits of Defensive Driving**
  - Always wear your seatbelt.
- Continuously evaluate driving conditions.
- Scan ahead and use the “What If” strategy.
- Maintain personal control—even if other drivers don’t.
- Observe the 3-second following distance rule.
- Recognize hazards, understand the defensive measures, and act.
- Be patient with other drivers—courtesy, respect, dignity.