

RULES OF THE ROAD

A Guide to Safe Driving

Everyone has a responsibility to drive defensively and follow vehicle and traffic laws. If driving is one of your job duties, you have some additional responsibilities—you are responsible for the safety of the individuals you support, potentially other staff who are with you, and for the agency vehicle you are driving.

*You cannot control other drivers. What you can control is your own driving, and how you choose to interact with other drivers on the road. The choices you make while driving will significantly impact how safe of a driver you are. **And your number one goal should be to drive safely!***

BEFORE THE TRIP

- 🚗 Do a pre-trip inspection of the vehicle you will drive—every time!
- 🚗 Report any needed repairs promptly.
- 🚗 Keep the vehicle's fuel tank no less than half full—above is better. This is especially important in colder weather—you want to make sure you have enough gas to heat your vehicle if you get stuck somewhere on the road.
- 🚗 Know your route before you leave.
- 🚗 Take special care when loading and unloading passengers.
 - Take the time to make sure all passengers are properly secured. Don't forget seatbelts—even if a person is using their own wheelchair seatbelt, you still need to make sure they also use the vehicle seatbelt.
 - Use caution when operating a vehicle ramp or lift.
- 🚗 Make adjustments to vehicle controls—such as air conditioning and mirrors—before beginning to drive or after the car is no longer in motion.

DURING THE TRIP

- 🚗 Watch your following distance. The closer you are to the vehicle in front of you, the less time you have to react if you need to stop.
- 🚗 Take care when parking. Make sure you have enough space on either side of the vehicle for people to exit.
 - Avoid situations where you'll need to back up, especially if you're driving a larger vehicle.
- 🚗 Headlights should be on at all times when the vehicle is in motion. This makes you more visible to other drivers.
- 🚗 Obey all posted speed limit signs. It's the law!
- 🚗 Keep distractions while driving to a minimum. When you're driving, your focus should be on driving— that is it!
- 🚗 Keep both hands on the steering wheel and eyes on the road.
- 🚗 Drive defensively. You cannot control what other drivers do, but you can control how you react and respond.
 - Stay alert! Keep your eyes moving, look down the road, and get the "big picture."
 - Always signal your intention—even if you're just switching lanes.
 - Give emergency vehicles the right of way
 - At railroad crossings, always stop, look, and listen before crossing.
 - Do not pass a stopped school bus with flashing lights or an extended stop arm.
 - Watch for merges and highway entrances, and move to the passing lane if possible.
- 🚗 If you have to pull over, do so in a safe area. You don't want to create another hazard by pulling over in a place that makes your vehicle susceptible to being hit.

AFTER THE TRIP

- 🚗 Always wait until the vehicle is parked before allowing passengers to exit.
- 🚗 Double check the vehicle to make sure all passengers have exited before leaving it.
- 🚗 Do a post-trip inspection of the vehicle at the end of your trip.

It is everyone's goal to get home safely. Make the choice to be a safe driver—and follow the rules of the road.

