

## Tailgate Meeting Guide: Avoiding Aggressive Drivers

Aggressive driving contributes to a significant number of crashes, injuries and fatalities. Information and practical tips in this guide will help your employees recognize aggressive driving behaviours and reduce their risk of being involved in a crash.

### What is aggressive driving?

Aggressive driving puts the driver and other road users at greater risk. The most dangerous aggressive driving behaviours include:

- **Tailgating** – following too closely and not allowing enough stopping space between you and the vehicle ahead
- **Ignoring traffic control devices** – running a red light, *rolling through* a stop sign, not obeying a traffic control person
- **Failing to yield the right-of-way** – especially at intersections, when merging, or by lane blocking (deliberately preventing someone from merging or changing lanes).
- **Improper passing** – passing when it's not safe to do so, merging too closely in front of another vehicle, passing on the right, weaving in and out
- **Speeding** – driving over the speed limit and/or driving too fast for conditions

### Why is it important to steer clear of aggressive drivers and aggressive driving behaviours?

- Police reports show that aggressive driving behaviours are contributing factors in nearly 40% of crash fatalities in BC <sup>1</sup>. Speeding alone contributes to 27% of fatal crashes <sup>2</sup>.
- Many drivers think they drive better than they actually do. Aggressive drivers often aren't able to drive well enough to prevent a crash when their driving creates a dangerous situation.
- Limiting your exposure to aggressive drivers reduces the chance you'll be a victim in a crash they cause.

### How can you and other road users avoid aggressive drivers?

**Learn to recognize aggressive driving behaviours** – Knowing what aggressive driving behaviours *look like* will help you quickly identify vehicles that are being driven dangerously.

**Be on the lookout for aggressive drivers** – Use your mirrors and peripheral vision to actively monitor the area around your vehicle. When you spot a vehicle being driven aggressively make a mental note of the vehicle and its position. Stay alert to the likelihood that driver may create hazards that you'll need to deal with.

**Manage the situation** - When you see an aggressive driver, make your avoidance plan. Most often, the best solution is to let them go ahead. Find a safe place, adjust your lane position a little to the right so they can see the way is clear. You may want to gently reduce your speed to encourage them to pass.

1 - [Fatal Victims By Top Contributing Factor](#); 2 - ICBC [Quick Statistics, 2018](#)

**Get out of harm's way** – If an aggressive driver enters your safe driving zone and you're feeling threatened, you may want to find a safe place to pull over and let that driver get well ahead of you. While you're there you may want to call the local police (non-emergency) and report the vehicle. If you're experiencing numerous aggressive drivers on your usual route, you can avoid them by using a different route.

**Remember** – large vehicles and those with heavy loads need more space behind and in front of them and their drivers need more time to react.

**Set a good example** – Follow the rules of the road. Your safe driving behaviours contribute to the safety of all road users, and they are a good example for other drivers to follow.

**Be patient and courteous** – All drivers sometimes make mistakes. Trying to *educate* them by honking your horn usually doesn't help. In fact, challenging or engaging with an aggressive driver often escalates the situation and increases risks. Your patience, courtesy and tolerance help build a better road safety culture – and reduce your stress level.

### How can you reduce your chance of driving aggressively?

**Make a plan and give yourself enough time** – Not knowing where you're going or not having enough time to get there are among the most common reasons for aggressive driving behaviours. Avoid those traps: think about the route you're going to take and make a trip plan with a realistic schedule. Make adjustments when trips don't proceed exactly as planned.

**Don't take your problems and frustrations with you when you drive** – Getting behind the wheel when you're upset, frustrated or grumpy can be an invitation to poor driving behaviours. Check your emotions at the door. Don't let them be a negative influence on how you drive.

**Recognize stress and defeat it** – If you're driving and you feel your stress level creeping up, turn on some relaxing music, open a window or practice a gentle breathing technique. Pull over and take a break, drink some water and stretch your legs. Reduce risks – and feel better for it.

**Be honest about your driving practices** – Think about your own driving. Check how closely you follow the vehicle in front of you, and how much space you leave when you pass a vehicle. Glance at your speedometer the next time you go through a school zone. Be honest and fix any poor driving habits you notice.

### Resources

[High-risk driving](#)

[Driving Habits Survey Results 2018](#)

[Causes of aggressive driving and how to solve It](#)

[Aggressive Driving](#)

[Establish and Maintain Safety Zones](#)