



Defensive driving is a proactive approach to driving that emphasizes safety, awareness, and anticipation of potential hazards.

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## Defensive Driving Basics and Why They are Important

Driving is an essential part of daily life for many people, but it also comes with risks. Every year, thousands of accidents occur due to distracted driving, speeding, and other unsafe behaviors. Defensive driving is a proactive approach to driving that emphasizes safety, awareness, and anticipation of potential hazards. This article explores the basics of defensive driving and why it is crucial for ensuring safety on the road.

### What is Defensive Driving?

Let's say you are driving on a freeway in the outermost lane and you see a car on the freeway onramp just in front of you. Would you speed up to allow the other car to merge onto the freeway behind you, or would you slow down and let the other vehicle merge in front of you? Your answer may indicate whether you are practicing defensive driving or not. While there may be several factors at play in an actual situation, in general, the safest practice, *the defensive driving technique*, would be to slow down and allow the other vehicle to merge in front of you.

Defensive driving is a set of driving practices designed to reduce the risk of accidents by anticipating dangerous situations and making safe, informed decisions. It involves being alert, cautious, and prepared to react to the actions of other

drivers, road conditions, and unexpected events.

### Defensive Driving Basics

#### Stay Focused

- **Avoid Distractions:** Keep your attention on the road and avoid using your phone, eating, or engaging in other activities while driving.
- **Scan the Road Ahead:** Continuously monitor your surroundings, including vehicles, pedestrians, and road signs.
- **Check Mirrors Regularly:** Use your rearview and side mirrors to stay aware of what's happening behind and beside you.

#### Maintain a Safe Following Distance

- **The 3-Second Rule:** Keep at least three seconds of distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you. Increase this distance in adverse weather or heavy traffic.
- **Avoid Tailgating:** Tailgating reduces reaction time and increases the likelihood of a collision.

#### Obey Traffic Laws

- **Follow Speed Limits:** Driving at a safe speed gives you more time to react to hazards.
- **Use Turn Signals:** Always signal

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your intentions to other drivers to avoid confusion.

- **Stop at Red Lights and Stop Signs:** Never rush through intersections, as they are common sites for accidents.

### Anticipate Other Drivers' Actions

- **Expect the Unexpected:** Assume that other drivers may make mistakes, such as sudden lane changes or running red lights.
- **Watch for Aggressive Drivers:** Stay calm and avoid engaging with drivers who are speeding, tailgating, or weaving through traffic.
- **Be Prepared to Yield:** Even if you have the right of way, yielding can prevent accidents in situations where other drivers are not following the rules.

### Adjust for Road and Weather Conditions

- **Slow Down in Bad Weather:** Rain, snow, and fog can reduce visibility and traction, so adjust your speed accordingly.
- **Be Cautious on Curves and Hills:** Reduce speed and stay alert for vehicles or obstacles that may be hidden from view.
- **Avoid Driving in Hazardous Conditions:** If possible, delay travel during severe weather or poor road conditions.

### Use Safety Equipment

- **Wear Your Seatbelt:** Seatbelts

significantly reduce the risk of injury in an accident.

- **Ensure Proper Vehicle Maintenance:** Regularly check brakes, tires, lights, and other essential components to ensure your vehicle is safe to drive.
- **Use Headlights:** Turn on your headlights during low visibility conditions or at night to improve visibility for yourself and others.

### Stay Calm and Patient

- **Avoid Road Rage:** Keep your emotions in check and don't let frustration lead to aggressive driving.
- **Plan Ahead:** Allow extra time for your trip to avoid rushing and making unsafe decisions.

### Why Defensive Driving is Important

#### Reduces the Risk of Accidents

Defensive driving minimizes the likelihood of collisions by encouraging safe practices and proactive decision-making. It helps drivers anticipate and avoid dangerous situations.

#### Saves Lives

By practicing defensive driving, you protect yourself, your passengers, and others on the road. Many accidents can be prevented with simple precautions.

#### Lowers Insurance Costs

Drivers who practice defensive driving are less likely to be involved in accidents, which can lead to lower insurance premiums and fewer claims.

### Promotes Road Safety

Defensive driving contributes to a safer driving environment for everyone. When drivers follow safe practices, it reduces the overall risk of accidents and injuries.

### Prepares Drivers for Unexpected Situations

Defensive driving teaches drivers to stay alert and react appropriately to sudden changes, such as a vehicle swerving or a pedestrian crossing unexpectedly.

### Conclusion

Defensive driving is not just a skill—it's a mindset that prioritizes safety and responsibility on the road. By staying focused, obeying traffic laws, and anticipating potential hazards, drivers can significantly reduce the risk of accidents and create a safer driving environment for everyone. Whether you're a new driver or an experienced one, practicing defensive driving is essential for protecting lives and ensuring peace of mind on the road.



## Getting Ready for Spring: Creating a Clean and Healthy School Environment

Spring is a season of renewal and growth, making it the perfect time for schools to focus on housekeeping practices that ensure a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for students, staff, and visitors. A well-maintained school not only promotes health and safety but also fosters a positive learning atmosphere. Here are some essential spring housekeeping practices for schools to consider.

### 1. Deep Cleaning Classrooms and Common Areas

Classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, and other common areas see heavy use throughout the school year. Spring is an ideal time to conduct a thorough cleaning to remove accumulated dirt, dust, and allergens. Key tasks include:

- Dusting and wiping down surfaces, including desks, chairs, shelves, and windowsills.
- Cleaning and sanitizing high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, and handrails.
- Vacuuming and shampooing carpets, as well as mopping hard floors.
- Washing windows to let in natural light and improve visibility.

### 2. Organizing and Decluttering

Spring cleaning is an opportunity to declutter and organize spaces for better functionality. Encourage staff and students to:

- Sort through old supplies, books, and materials, discarding or donating items no longer needed.
- Organize storage areas, ensuring that supplies are easily accessible and labeled.
- Clear out lost-and-found bins and return unclaimed items to their owners or donate them.

### 3. Inspecting and Maintaining Facilities

A thorough inspection of the school's facilities can help identify and address



Spring is also a good time to review and update safety protocols to ensure the school is prepared for emergencies.

maintenance issues before they become major problems. Focus on:

- Checking for leaks, cracks, or damage in walls, ceilings, and floors.
- Inspecting HVAC systems to ensure proper ventilation and air quality.
- Testing fire alarms, smoke detectors, and emergency lighting systems.
- Repairing or replacing damaged furniture, fixtures, and equipment.

### 4. Refreshing Outdoor Spaces

Spring is the perfect time to revitalize outdoor areas, which are essential for physical activities and outdoor learning. Key tasks include:

- Cleaning playground equipment and ensuring it is safe and in good condition.
- Raking leaves, trimming bushes, and planting flowers or shrubs to enhance the school's curb appeal.
- Inspecting and repairing outdoor seating, fences, and walkways.
- Ensuring sports fields and courts are clean, marked, and ready for use.

### 5. Promoting Health and Hygiene

Maintaining a healthy school environment is crucial, especially during allergy season and in the wake of flu outbreaks. Steps to promote health and

hygiene include:

- Restocking hand sanitizers, soap, and paper towels in restrooms and common areas.
- Encouraging proper handwashing practices among students and staff.
- Scheduling regular pest control to prevent infestations.
- Ensuring that cleaning supplies and chemicals are stored safely and used appropriately.

### 6. Engaging the School Community

Spring housekeeping can be a collaborative effort that involves the entire school community. Consider:

- Organizing a "Spring Cleaning Day" where students, staff, and parents work together to clean and beautify the school.
- Hosting workshops or assemblies to educate students about the importance of cleanliness and environmental responsibility.
- Encouraging students to take ownership of their personal spaces, such as desks and lockers.

### 7. Sustainability Practices

Incorporating eco-friendly practices into spring housekeeping can teach students the value of sustainability. Ideas include:

- Recycling paper, plastic, and other materials during the cleaning process.
- Using green cleaning products that are safe for the environment and reduce chemical exposure.
- Installing energy-efficient lighting and water-saving fixtures where possible.

### 8. Updating Safety Protocols

Spring is also a good time to review and update safety protocols to ensure the school is prepared for emergencies. This includes:

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- Conducting fire drills and emergency evacuation exercises.
- Reviewing first aid kits and restocking supplies as needed.
- Ensuring that all staff are trained in emergency response procedures.

### Conclusion

Spring housekeeping is more than just cleaning—it's about creating a safe, healthy, and inspiring environment for

learning and growth. By implementing these practices, schools can ensure that their facilities are ready to support students and staff as they thrive throughout the rest of the academic year.

A clean and organized school not only reflects pride in the institution but also sets the stage for success and well-being for everyone who walks through its doors.

Let's make this spring a season of renewal and positivity for your school community!

## Reaction Time and Safety: The Nervous System as Your First Line of Defense

Before muscles move, eyes focus, or decisions are made, one system takes the lead in keeping you safe: the nervous system. It determines how quickly you notice a hazard, how fast you react, and how accurately you respond. In both industrial and office settings, the quality of your nervous-system function directly influences your safety, awareness, and performance.

In industrial environments, where conditions can change in an instant, reaction time matters. Slippery surfaces, shifting materials, moving equipment, or unexpected noises require workers to stay alert. But fatigue, stress, dehydration, and poor sleep can all slow neural processing. Even a half-second delay can increase the risk of slips, trips, mistakes, or tool-handling errors.

Office workers may not face the same physical hazards, but they still rely heavily on cognitive reaction time. Long hours of screen work, digital multitasking, and mental fatigue reduce attention span and

decision-making speed. This affects everything from problem-solving to driving home at the end of the day.

Supporting the nervous system strengthens awareness and responsiveness. Sleep is the most powerful tool. *Even one night of poor rest can reduce reaction time as much as alcohol.* Hydration keeps nerves firing smoothly. Nutrition fuels the brain. Movement increases blood flow, sharpening focus, and mindfulness or brief disengagement from screens or noise helps reset sensory processing.

A finely tuned nervous system makes workers quicker, sharper, and safer. When we give this system the support it needs, we're not just improving reaction time, we're reducing risk, protecting health, and building a stronger foundation for performance on and off the job.

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100 East 8th Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Bill Maly  
Director of Risk Management

bmaly@catholicaoc.org  
513.263.3354

Mark Russell  
Assistant Director Risk Management

mrussell@catholicaoc.org  
513.263.6678

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