Aggressive Driving

They are out there on the roads every day. Chances are they will always exist. If you are not one, you most certainly have had an encounter with one – the aggressive driver. Aggressive driving has become a serious problem on our roadways. Aggressive driving occurs when a driver commits a combination of moving traffic offenses that endanger other persons or property. These moving traffic offenses are commonly referred to as bad driving habits. These bad habits consist of:

- Running stop signs and red lights
- Speeding, tailgating, and weaving between lanes
- Passing on the right of a vehicle
- Making inappropriate hand and facial gestures
- Screaming, honking the horn, and flashing headlights

Do any of these bad driving habits sound familiar? Have you ever experienced a close call or even an automobile accident due to any of these moving traffic offenses? Whether you have or haven’t, going forward it would be a good idea to become familiar with the following guidelines when dealing with an aggressive driver:

- Make every attempt to safely move out of the aggressive driver’s way.
- Do not challenge an aggressive driver by speeding up or attempting to “hold your own” in the travel lane.
- Always wear your seat belt – not only will it hold you in your seat and behind the wheel in case you need to make an abrupt driving maneuver, but it will also protect you in a crash.
- Avoid eye contact with the aggressive driver.
- Ignore gestures, and refuse to return them.
- Report aggressive drivers to the appropriate authorities by providing a vehicle description, license number, location, and if possible, direction of travel.
- If you have a cell phone, and can safely get off the roadway and stop, call the police. Many law enforcement agencies have special numbers, such as 9-1-1 or *sp.

If the aggressive driver is involved in a crash farther down the road, stop at a safe distance from the crash scene, wait for the police to arrive, and report the driving behavior that you witnessed. Don’t be a victim of aggressive driving. By following these guidelines, you’ll be doing your part in reducing this type of risk and making our roadways safer.

References:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Contributed by: Carl Baldwin, Safety & Loss Control Specialist, West Virginia Board of Risk and Insurance Management