

CSDA Best Practice for Sawing and Drilling Operations

Title: Aggressive Driving and Road Rage

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The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) defines aggressive driving as, “The operation of a motor vehicle in a manner that endangers or is likely to endanger persons or property.” Aggressive driving includes following too closely, driving at excessive speeds, weaving through traffic or running through stop lights. NHTSA defines road rage as assault with a motor vehicle or other dangerous weapon caused by an incident that occurred on a roadway. Road rage can escalate from aggressive driving to gesturing in anger, yelling at another motorist, confrontation, physical assault and even murder. An important distinction is that aggressive driving is a traffic violation while road rage—yelling and gesturing aside—is a criminal offense. Neither is allowed while driving a company-provided vehicle.

The following are contributing factors that can lead to aggressive driving and/or road rage. Professionals in the sawing and drilling industry should be aware of these factors and understand how they affect drivers.

1. Traffic Delays – traffic congestion is mentioned frequently as a major contributing factor to aggressive driving. On-the-road delays, highway maintenance and/or accidents and collisions affect all drivers at some point.
2. Running Late – Some people drive aggressively because they have too much to do and not enough time to do it all. Modern life weighs heavily on some individuals and can contribute to a pattern of aggressive driving.
3. Anonymity – Drivers can feel insulated in their vehicles, shielded from the outside world. This detachment can erode inhibitions to antisocial behavior that normally shape interpersonal relations.

Here are some ways that employers and employees can prevent aggressive driving and road rage while driving.

Employers:

Employers should educate employees on how to prevent aggressive driving and road rage, including the following:

1. Knowledge of the type of vehicle being driven, including size, height, length and weight. Knowing this information will help employees control the vehicle and position it correctly on the road.
2. How to read map books and operate GPS systems to choose the best routes. Some routes may not be suitable for large vehicles, and taking them could cause delays for other drivers.
3. Proper care and maintenance of vehicle and/or trailers. Maintaining a vehicle will prevent breakdowns, flat tires or other incidents that may cause delays.
4. Reiteration that aggressive driving and/or road rage is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

5. What a driver should do if they encounter aggressive driving and/or road rage from another motorist.
6. Maintaining awareness of surroundings and keeping emotions in check while driving.

Employees:

1. Think before you react! Before reacting to a traffic situation that makes you angry, think about the consequences of your actions.
2. Allow adequate time for your trip. Starting out early to account for traffic conditions will lessen stress level and anxiety.
3. Do not make obscene gesture to others, even if they are driving aggressively. This could escalate the situation and lead to road rage.
4. Use the passing lane on the highway for passing; do not drive in the passing lane for long periods of time. Doing so may anger other drivers and could promote tailgating and/or road rage.
5. Keep a safe following distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you.
6. Avoid eye contact with aggressive drivers.
7. Contact local authorities if you observe road rage. Stay away from the offending vehicle and try to obtain the make, model, year and license plate number. This information will be required when making a police report.

Being prepared and giving yourself enough time to get to your job is important to maintaining patience while driving. Remember, aggressive driving and/or road rage is unacceptable. Driver that use their vehicle as a weapon they are committing a criminal offense.

You cannot control the actions and behaviors of other drivers. Therefore, maintain awareness of your surroundings and keep your emotions in check while driving. Doing so will avoid conflicts and get you and your passengers to your destination safely.