

Defensive Driving: A message from the Western New England University Safety Committee

When operating a motor vehicle, drivers should practice defensive driving techniques. Defensive driving is the art of driving so as to prevent and avoid traffic crashes, regardless of the unsafe conditions and actions created by other drivers and adverse road and or weather conditions.

A defensive driver will practice the following eight techniques:

- Glance well ahead in the direction of travel. Look 2 or 3 vehicles ahead to observe driving conditions in front of you. This allows you to consider a condition before you reach it;
- Get the “big picture”; learn to see the entire roadway. Sweep the scene, sides and back. Avoid “tunnel vision”. Keep your eyes moving; Position vehicle slightly offset to traffic to increase your field of vision.
- Always allow an escape route, leave a cushion by slowing or moving ahead of the vehicles beside you;
- Keep your vehicle visible and signal your intentions early;
- When stopped prior to making left turns across incoming traffic leave wheels straight to prevent being pushed into oncoming traffic in the event of a rear-end crash;
- When entering intersections practice looking left/right/left. Be sure to come to a full stop before proceeding;
- Learn to compensate for hazards such as weather, debris, potholes, loose gravel, or sand; and
- ALWAYS maintain a cautious driving attitude.

Thank you for your consideration.