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Professional Drivers

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Emergency Vehicles: The Rules Of The Road for Motorists

A review of 1997 statistics by the auto club of Southern California found that, in California alone, emergency vehicles were involved in 21 fatal and 1,839 injury traffic collisions. Motorists were at fault in 75 percent of fatal collisions and 63 percent of injury collisions.

1. If the emergency vehicle is close behind you, don't stop.
2. Put your right turn signal on to let the emergency vehicle know that you see it.
3. Pull over to the right and stop. If you are in the center lane, move as far to the right as possible.
4. Don't block an intersection. If you are already in an intersection, proceed through, then move right.
5. If your vehicle is in the left turn lane, you may be directed by emergency personnel to make a U-turn or a sharp right turn in front of other traffic lanes and then pull to the right.
6. On freeways, always pull over to the right, not left or center median, if an emergency vehicle has its headlights on. If patrol cars are flashing their lights and cutting across lanes, they are trying to clear the way.
7. Don't play the radio so loudly that you can't hear approaching sirens.
8. Consider driving with the driver-side window down one-quarter inch to make it easier to hear emergency vehicles.
9. Pay attention to what other vehicles are doing-they may have detected an emergency vehicle you can't yet see or hear.
10. It's illegal to follow emergency vehicles to see where they are headed.
11. All motorists should remember that emergency vehicles are exempted from certain rules of the road-they are allowed to cross red lights, exceed the speed limit, and use any lane if safe to do so.
12. Loyola University Medical Center Injury Prevention Program

[Original here](#)

"I don't know what we're going to do about it"

A recent telling statistic of inconsiderateness in contemporary culture is that in Florida, which is not

worse than the corridor from Washington, D.C., to Boston, or the areas of Chicago, Dallas, and Los Angeles, the accident rate for emergency vehicles has more than doubled from 1987 to 1997.

Ambulance drivers regularly complain that many drivers hardly ever give way. In Florida in 1997 there were 736 crashes involving ambulances, fire trucks, and police cars, an increase of 62 percent over 1987. In central Florida the number of accidents of emergency vehicles rose from 66 to 101, and merely Orange County (including Orlando) nearly doubled to the 1997 number of 61 accidents. This does not count the many times emergency vehicles are merely delayed in traffic from rendering lifesaving assistance.

The Fire Chief Ron Strosnider of Ocoee said, "I don't know what we're going to do about it" (Daytona Beach News-Journal, June 7, 1999, p. 2C).

[original here](#)

Links



[Emergency Vehicle Sites](#)

[American Emergency Vehicles](#)

[Emergency Vehicle Owners & Operators Association](#)

[Sirens for Sale](#)

[NAVET-NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY VEHICLE TECHNICIANS](#)

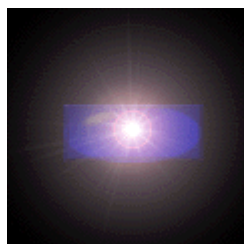
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[EMT-Paramedic: National Standard Curriculum](#)

[NHTSA and EMS](#)

New York State Department of Health



Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
POLICY STATEMENT
Emergency Vehicle Operations for
Ambulances and Other EMS Response
Vehicles Including a Model Standard
Operating Procedure for EMS Agencies

PURPOSES (...)

4.To provide information to develop educational programs for EMS emergency

vehicle operators.

BACKGROUND

Recently an epidemic of ambulance vehicle crashes and accidents has been identified. The magnitude of the problem requires that every NYS EMS agency be made aware of the problem and take immediate steps to reduce the potential for these accidents.

New York State Department of Motor Vehicle statistics illustrate consistent yearly frequency of 350 ambulance accidents or crashes, injuring almost 2 persons per day. These statistics also show that most of these accidents are avoidable. Based on these statistics, if each EMS response vehicle were able to stop at every controlled intersection, 75% of all of these accidents could be prevented.

EMS emergency response vehicles must be operated in a manner that provides for due regard and the safety of all persons and property. Safe arrival and patient welfare shall always have priority over unnecessary speed or hazardous driving practices while enroute to an incident or to the hospital. The NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law (V&T) authorizes privileges that ambulance and other emergency vehicle drivers may use during an emergency operation.

(...)

LEGAL BACKGROUND

The NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law states the following:

114-b. Emergency Operations – the operation, or parking, of an authorized emergency vehicle, when such vehicle is engaged in transporting a sick or injured person... Emergency operation shall not include returning from such service.

101. Authorized emergency vehicles – every ambulance, ... emergency ambulance service vehicle.

1104 Authorized Emergency Vehicles –

(a) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle, when involved in an emergency operation, may exercise the privileges set forth in this section, but subject to the conditions herein stated.

(b) The driver of an authorized emergency vehicle may:

1. Stop, stand or park irrespective of the provisions of this title;
2. Proceed past a steady red signal, a flashing red signal or a stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operations;
3. Exceed the maximum speed limits so long as he does not endanger life or property;
4. Disregard the regulations governing directions of movement or turning in specified directions.

(c) Except for an authorized emergency vehicle operated as a police vehicle, the exemptions herein granted to an authorized emergency vehicle shall apply only when audible signals are sounded from any said vehicle while in motion by bell, horn, siren, electronic device or exhaust whistle as may be reasonably necessary, and when the vehicle is equipped with at least one lighted lamp so that from any direction, under normal atmospheric conditions from a distance of five hundred feet from such vehicle, at least one red light will be displayed and visible.

(e) THE FOREGOING PROVISIONS SHALL NOT RELIEVE THE DRIVER OF AN AUTHORIZED EMERGENCY VEHICLE FROM THE DUTY TO DRIVE WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL PERSONS, NOR SHALL SUCH

PROVISIONS PROTECT THE DRIVER FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS RECKLESS DISREGARD FOR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS.

DISCUSSION

(...)

Emergency operations in EMS are always an affirmative decision that is made at the time of each response. Today, EMD, industry data, EMS educational materials, legal case precedents, and other industry practices set a standard of care for emergency vehicle operation which is binding on all EMS providers. Drivers of emergency vehicles are reminded that they solely bear the responsibility for driving safely and with due regard. There is no immunity from liability provided in NYS law for driving.

NYS – EMS POLICY

Every EMS response vehicle must be driven safely at all times, usually not exceeding the speed limit. Drivers exercising any of the V&T Law privileges must do so cautiously and with due regard for the safety of all others.

Types of Responses -

Non-emergency Operations - anytime an EMS response vehicle is out of the station on an assignment other than an emergency run, shall be considered to be a routine operation. All routine operations will be considered non-emergency and shall be made using headlights only - no light bars, beacons, corner or grill flashers or sirens shall be used. During a non-emergency operation, the ambulance shall be driven in a safe manner and is not authorized to use any emergency vehicle privileges as provided for in the V&T Law.

Emergency Operations - shall be limited to any response to the scene or the hospital where the driver of the emergency vehicle actually perceives, based on instructions received or information available to him or her, the call to be a true emergency. EMD dispatch classifications⁶, indicating a true or potentially true emergency should be used to determine the initial response type. Patient assessments made by a certified care provider, should determine the response type (usually C or U as an emergency) to the hospital. In order for a response to be a true or potentially true emergency, the operator or certified care provider must have an articulable reason to believe that emergency operations may make a difference in patient outcome. During an emergency operation headlights and all emergency lights shall be illuminated and the siren used as necessary.

Each EMS response vehicle operator must recognize that the emergency vehicle has no absolute right of way, it is qualified and cannot be taken forcefully.

During emergency operations every EMS response vehicle must be operated in such a manner and at such a speed upon approaching an intersection, controlled by a traffic control device so as to permit safe passage through the intersection. Before entering the intersection the operator must reduce the speed of the vehicle to be able to stop the vehicle if necessary to permit such safe passage.

Every EMS response vehicle must stop upon encountering a stopped school bus with red lights flashing; any non controlled railroad crossing or railroad crossing at which safety gates and/or warning lights are activated or if requested by a police officer.

EMS response vehicles shall not use escorts or travel in convoys due to the extreme dangers associated with multiple emergency vehicles operating in close proximity to each other.

At emergency scenes the use of emergency warning lights must be governed by the need to protect the safety of all personnel, patients and the public. In some cases less is better and the use of emergency lights should be minimized.

Every NYS ambulance or ALSFR service must have and enforce a written policy which describes the authorized practices for driving EMS emergency response vehicles by their members or employees. The service policy must be consistent with

this policy and must include the following:

A definition of emergency and non emergency call types, including dispatch criteria for determining the type of call.

A description of the authorization required to use emergency operations on dispatch and enroute to the hospital, including call types, dispatcher and crew chief authority and other criteria.

A statement regarding exceeding the posted speed limit.

A statement regarding the speed permitted and stopping requirements through intersections which are uncontrolled or controlled.

Frequency and content of driver screening and training requirements for individuals authorized by the service to drive an EMS response vehicle.

Insurance company driver screening including age, driving record, training, and other requirements.

Every NYS-EMS agency shall have a training program for all individuals authorized by the service to drive an EMS emergency response vehicle. The program shall include a curriculum, approved instructors, and frequency of training and documentation.

(...)

A prompt, safe response can be attained by:

Knowing where you are going.

All personnel are on board, seated and seat belts secured.

Leaving the station in a safe and standard manner:

- quickly boarding vehicle

- station doors fully open

Using warning devices to move with and around traffic and to request the right-of-way.

Driving defensively, at reasonable speeds, slowing or stopping at all intersections and giving approaching traffic adequate time to recognize the vehicle and yield the right of way.

Using pre-planned response routed which take into account hazards, construction, traffic density, etc.

MODEL SERVICE SPECIFIC POLICY

The following model policy may be easily adopted by any EMS service to be included as a part of the service's policies and standard operating procedures.

(...)

Types of Responses

Non – emergency Operations - anytime an EMS response vehicle is out of the station on an assignment other than an emergency run shall be considered to be a routine, non-emergency operation.

Emergency Operations - shall be limited to any response to a scene which is perceived to be a true emergency situation. True emergencies are defined by EMD and dispatch policy for a response to any situation in which there is a high probability of death or life threatening illness or injury. The risk of emergency operations must be demonstrably able to make a difference in patient outcome.

Emergency Vehicle Operations

First and Foremost – DO NO Harm !

1. Emergency operations are authorized only to responses deemed by dispatch protocol to be emergency in nature where the risks associated with emergency operations demonstrably make a difference in patient outcome.

(...)

5. EMS response vehicles do not have an absolute right of way, it is qualified and cannot be taken forcefully

6. During an emergency operation the vehicle's headlights and all emergency lights shall be illuminated and the siren used as necessary.

(...)

9. EMS response vehicles shall not exceed posted speed limits by more than ten (10) miles per hour.

10. EMS service vehicles shall not exceed posted speed limits when proceeding through intersections with a green signal or no control device.

11. When an EMS response vehicle approaches an intersection, with or without a control device, the vehicle must be operated in such a manner as to permit the driver to make a safe controlled stop.

12. When an EMS response vehicle approaches a red light, stop sign, stopped school bus or a railroad crossing, the vehicle must come to a complete stop.

13. When an EMS response vehicle uses the median (turning lane) or an oncoming traffic lane to approach intersections, they must come to a complete stop before proceeding through the intersection with caution.

14. When traffic conditions require an EMS response vehicle to travel in the oncoming traffic lanes, the maximum speed is twenty (20) miles per hour.

15. The use of escorts and convoys is not permitted.

16. The driver of an EMS response vehicle must account for all lanes of traffic prior to proceeding through an intersection.

(...)

Send questions or comments to: ems@health.state.ny.us

Revised: December 1999

April 13, 2000

Laura Trujillo of the Arizona Republic:

> Dr. James,

> I'm writing a story about how firefighters say fewer people are
> pulling over for their lights and sirens these days. This isn't about
> those people who don't hear or see them, but those people who just
> refuse. Firefighters say it's much worse than it was 10 years ago.
> Do you have any theories on this? Is it a more rushed society? more
> aggressive? rude? Any thoughts would be appreciated.

Ms. Trujillo,

The fact is that people have traffic emotions that have not been educated. As congestion increases there is more of an emotional challenge to handle the many nerve racking close calls—maybe hundreds every day for the average 30-min. commute. But this is not the cause of the aggressiveness and rebellion against road regulations and etiquette like ignoring fire engines.

The cause is in our socialization. We grow up being driven around by aggressive drivers. This is half of the cause. As we start driving ourselves, the habits learned in childhood are now modeled and we get more aggressive with every generation as the habit is passed on.

The other half of the cause is our years of exposure to thousands of TV scenes, cartoons, and commercials depicting drivers behaving badly and having fun and getting away with it.

These two causes insure that we are cynical drivers, opportunistically taking advantage of others, not a team player in traffic, willing to break laws as a matter of routine, enjoying winning, hating to lose like missing an amber light and having to stop. With this context in mind now, consider the siren complaint by fire engines, and you can include other emergency vehicles like ambulances.

Some people chase sirens for fun, but this is still rare, I think (there is little solid evidence on any of this). Most drivers are either cynical or confused. Why they're cynical, I explained above. This translates as lack of care for the emergency vehicle and its public function. This is a character lapse, in my view. Though this is a normal tendency, we should fight it in ourselves because it threatens society and can lead us deeper into less civilized territory—very unhealthy.

But others who appear not to respond appropriately to the emergency vehicle may actually be confused and their slow reactions may appear as uncooperative. Why are they confused? I can mention two causes. First, they're not trained to do this. Some drivers can learn this on their own, but others need training. So we need to train drivers how to behave around emergency vehicles and big trucks. Second, the sound of the sirens have not been updated. Several years ago an engineer in England proved that drivers cannot accurately locate a siren's position and direction relative to themselves—until the vehicle is very close, and by then they may be in the way or not know how to get out fast and safely.

The female British engineer was interviewed on National Public Radio last year and I hear her mention that she invented a new siren sound that is like the old one but has in addition a second sound that's not wavy like the siren. When drivers in traffic hear BOTH sounds in the siren they can localize it from a distance and its direction. They installed these new sirens in England, she said, but in the US there is a bureaucratic hold up as to who has jurisdiction and who is going to pay for it.

Prime Factors in Emergency Vehicle Accidents



Excessive speed
Reckless driving
Failing to slow down when necessary

Failing to obey traffic signals
Disregarding traffic rules and regulations
Other Factors That Contribute to Emergency Vehicle Accidents

Weather Conditions
Road Conditions
Time of Day
Traffic
Other Driver's Reactions
Location

From: "Mizejewski, Gerald - Metro"
mizeje@twtdmail.com

To: DrDriving@DrDriving.org
Subject: note from reporter

Hi, My name is Gerald Mizejewski and I'm a reporter for the Washington Times. I'm writing a story about the city of Annapolis, and the attempts to help firetrucks and ambulances get through heavy traffic. Police officers are following these vehicles to make sure the cars steer clear. Sixty-dollar tickets are being written. Also, firefighters will be taking down license plate numbers of anyone who is rude and refuses to yield. Violators will get letters in the mail. Are these helpful measures? Do you know of any other attempts in the country to help ambulance and fire truck drivers deal with bad drivers? Thanks.

Date: Tue, 12 Dec 2000 09:10:37 -1000
From: Leon James <leon@hawaii.edu>
To: "Mizejewski, Gerald - Metro" mizeje@twtdmail.com

Subject: sirens

Mr. Mizejewski,

I've heard this problem from people around the country, so I know it's widespread and not localized. There is a real crisis in terms of aggressive driving in relation to emergency vehicles. The measures you've described to enforce the law are excellent in my opinion and they are going to help. Ultimately however you'll need to educate people.

Right now people behave around emergency vehicles with disregard and they learn this attitude in childhood. I think parents will have to take charge of their children's driver education. Law enforcement can add this educational component as well. I recommend they hand out TEE Cards (Traffic Emotions Education reminders) reminding people why they should support emergency vehicle operations and regulations.

Also, officilas should do something about sirens. They are too loud and difficult to determine which direction they come from. Sirens should use a

double sound, one superimposed on the other but different in quality. They've been using it in England for several years and has improved people's ability to tell which direction the emergency is coming from.

Write if you need additional comments. I assume you're aware of our [ems site](#) (this page).

from NHTSA

The Do's and Don'ts of Transporting Children in an Ambulance

Approximately six million children are transported by emergency medical services (EMS) vehicles each year in the United States. There are risks of injury associated with transport that can be minimized. An ambulance is NOT a standard passenger vehicle. Unlike the well-developed and publicized child passenger safety standards and guidelines, specifications for the safe transport of ill and injured children in ambulances are still under development. Standard automotive safety practices and techniques cannot be applied directly to EMS vehicle environments due to biomechanical and practical differences. Caution is encouraged in the application of passenger vehicle principles to ambulances and in the utilization of new and unproven products.

(...)

A national consensus committee, sponsored by the EMSC Program, is reviewing current EMS child transportation safety practices. The group, which includes representatives from EMS national organizations, federal agencies, and transportation safety engineers, is developing preliminary recommendations for EMS providers until scientific research is completed.

(...)

Pending research and consensus outcomes, the following guidelines for good practice should be observed when transporting children in EMS vehicles.

- **DO** drive cautiously at safe speeds observing traffic laws.
- **DO** tightly secure all monitoring devices and other equipment
- **DO** ensure available restraint systems are used by EMTs and other occupants, including the patient.
- **DO** transport children who are not patients, properly restrained, in an alternate passenger vehicle, whenever possible.
- **DO** encourage utilization of the DOT NHTSA Emergency Vehicle Operating Course (EVOC), National Standard Curriculum.
- **DO NOT** drive at unsafe high speeds with rapid acceleration, decelerations, and turns.
- **DO NOT** leave monitoring devices and other equipment unsecured in moving EMS vehicles.
- **DO NOT** allow parents, caregivers, EMTs or other passengers to be unrestrained during transport.
- **DO NOT** have the child/infant held in the parent, caregiver, or EMT's arms or lap during transport.
- **DO NOT** allow emergency vehicles to be operated by

persons who have not completed the DOT EVOC or equivalent.

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Problems Faced at Intersections

- Reduced visibility of the emergency vehicle
- Pedestrian traffic not paying attention
- Congested roadways
- Confused civilian drivers

Intersection Accidents

- Most costly due to the nature of the crash -- usually a broadside or T-bone collision
- Have the greatest potential for loss of life and total loss of equipment
- Happen because operator ASSUMES the right of way

Date: Tue, 6 Jun 2000 05:25:47 -1000

From: Kathlyn Fowler kfowler@studiosatthelakes.com
To: "'leon@hawaii.edu'" leon@hawaii.edu
Subject: Yield Stats
6/6/2000

Dear Dr. James,

I am doing research on the worldwide problem of drivers not yielding to emergency vehicles on emergency runs. You have written and spoken so much about road rage, and the driver mentality. Do you have any comments or stats about this frustrating phenomena?

Mahalo,

Kathlyn Fowler kfowler@studiosatthelakes.com

Date: Wed, 7 Jun 2000 12:14:50 -1000
From: Kathlyn Fowler kfowler@studiosatthelakes.com
To: 'Leon James' <leon@hawaii.edu> Subject: RE: Yield Stats

Dear Dr. James,

Thank you so much for responding so quickly. I am not doing an article, at least not yet, but I am trying to open the public's eyes in another way. I recently wrote and I am the research producer on a Public Service Announcement commercial for television and radio relating to this yielding problem. It is in post right now. We will sell the spot to every fire department, transportation department, police, drivers education schools, etc. in the world. Well, maybe not that many, but as many as we can. The Houston Fire Department has already arranged for the spot to be aired on

the ABC affiliate here as soon as it is ready. It is time critical because they have problems everyday with drivers.

The spot premise is a man driving along with road rage and an indifferent attitude. He impedes an ambulance on an emergency run. The ambulance is rushing to a heart attack victim. When the ambulance finally arrives, the frustrated firefighters ask why it took them so long. One of the paramedics tells them about the latest idiot who won't yield. The victim's wife hears this exchange. At the end of the spot, the young man finds out that the victim is his very own father. The look his mother gives him is horrible to see. The spot is visually and emotionally very powerful. I hope it is well received and helps to save lives.

We were very lucky to have the complete cooperation from the Houston Fire Department. All of the firefighters and firefighter paramedics used in the spot are with the department, not actors. I wanted everything to be as authentic as possible. They were terrific and acted like the pros they all are.

Thanks again for the information. My "bible" for this project is a huge three holed notebook that now weighs eight pounds! Research is just like those computer viruses. I open one thing to read and find even more interesting info next to it. What fun.

Take care.

Attitude

- This is an important human aspect, especially for driving. What is the driver's disposition toward his driving? Is he:
 - Immature -- He's the only one whose safety he cares about
 - Brazen, show-off -- More concerned with image than reality. Gets a kick out of speed (the faster he goes, the more pumped up he gets)

Knowledge

- This aspect is learned. What do we know about our specific task
- Some people don't know the vehicles they are driving or don't care about them
 - Couldn't pour water out of a boot, even if the instructions were printed on the sole
- Some people don't know their surroundings
 - SSM plays a part here

Mental Fitness

- What is the current mental state of the driver? Is he tired from working 24 hours straight?
- Brick short of a full load, couple cans short of a six-pack
- May be OK for go-fer duty, but not for piloting propelled tonnage down the street
- Is he taking too many chances?

Judgement

- Again, another important part of driving. Look at yourself and your partner. Are you:
- Driving offensively rather than defensively?
- Does the driver barrel down on other vehicles, expecting them to move out of the way?
- Does the driver apply the "Lug Nut Rule"? I have more lug nuts, therefore I rule!

Interview with Leon James on Road Rage and Aggressive Driving

by Claudio Cordovil
Jornal Valor
Sao Paulo, Brazil

May 28, 2000

Claudio Cordovil: How many deaths are caused by road rage each year?

Leon James: Some people restrict the phrase road rage to assault and battery committed by one driver against another after getting into a dispute over driving. In the U.S. this occurs about 1200 a year, and it is rising by about 6% per year. Others, including myself and the government and safety experts, define road rage and aggressive driving together. It is more common in legislation to use the phrase "aggressive driving legislation" rather than road rage legislation. This is because aggressive driving does not usually involve assault or battery.

A few vocal groups, now growing every year, disagree that traffic violations should be considered "aggressive driving."

In terms of numbers, I estimate that every driver experiences road rage EMOTIONS on every trip, several times a day.

Claudio Cordovil: Do you believe that we must consider road rage as a kind of public health problem?

Leon James: Road rage and aggressive driving are public health issues. First because of the incidence:

**200 billion road rage exchanges a year in the U.S.

**42,000 fatalities a year, most of which could be avoided

**6 million crashes, 4 million injuries, 250 billion dollars cost

All this for one year adds up to an epidemic. Then you must add the stress and pollution factors as additional costs. Each of the 200 billion incidents of road rage or hostile exchanges creates some stress. Each added stress level has negative consequences on health, lowering immune system functioning, and increasing cardio-vascular damage. In terms of pollution, the cost runs into billions of dollars a year when you consider (a) how many extra and unnecessary times drivers use the gas pedal then the break due to road rage, impatience, aggressiveness; This requires extra fuel for every driver per year. More oil imports, higher prices per gallon, and more pollution in the air that has further economic

and health consequences.

How did I arrive at 400 billion road rage exchanges? Multiply this:

125 million drivers in the US every day X 365 days X 10 hostile aggressive road rage exchanges per trip = a little over 400 billion (and this is a conservative estimate. Try it on your own: next time you drive, how many times do you get angry or hostile or annoyed at another driver?) Claudio Cordovil: What aggressive road rage is becoming more common? In terms of assault and battery: shooting and using the car to ram someone.

In terms of aggressive behavior: running red lights, not yielding, lane hopping, insulting gestures and words, driving and drinking, speeding. The new aggressive driving laws in 16 states propose that aggressive driving be defined as 3 or more traffic infractions committed within a few minutes or miles, as observed by an officer.

Claudio Cordovil: Is road rage increasing?

Leon James: Yes. As congestion increases, drivers are more challenged emotionally to remain civilized and polite. This is possible to learn, but they need to be taught self-modification techniques. Please mention my Web site <http://DrDriving.org> where people can obtain information on such techniques. Also please mention my new book that offers such information:

Leon James and Diane Nahl: ROAD RAGE AND AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

In addition to congestion, we are making aggressiveness to be a learned generational habit. We are teaching our children now to grow up to be aggressive drivers by the way we behave in the car when they ride with us. Also, TV, cartoons, movies, and commercials all portray drivers behaving badly, and children learn from that by imitation and modeling. So aggressive driving will increase with every generation, unless counteracted by new education.

I have a Web site devoted to aggressive driving prevention activities

parents can do with their children: <http://DrDriving.org/carr> or else just go to the main site at <http://DrDriving.org> and link from there. CARR stands for Children Against Road Rage and I believe we owe our children this prevention program. Driver education should start in grade 1, not in high school. I provide details of a Lifelong Driver Self-Improvement Program in my congressional testimony on the Web.

Claudio Cordovil: Are there differences in aggressive driving across countries—is it a universal epidemic?

Leon James: Yes, it is universal. I follow Newsgroups on the Web with participating

drivers from England, Australia, Canada, Singapore, India, etc. Same thing everywhere. I consulted with officials from the Motor Vehicle Department in China where they have a road rage epidemic among their 17 million commercial drivers. I also created a course for law enforcement to deal with the problem and the San Antonio police department is now distributing

TEE Cards at traffic stops. These cards are driver education cards I created. See this Web site on TEE Cards. I also consult with trucking safety schools and emergency vehicle operators. It's the same problem everywhere.

Claudio Cordovil: Why car industry doesn't engage in the war against road rages by the creation of technical devices that punishes that kind of behavior? For example, the fitting of long sharps spikes sticking out from the center of every steering wheel

pointing to the heart of each driver engaged in rage or being alcohol impaired?

Leon James: I think there needs to be a greater awareness that the problem can be solved without punishing the drivers, but retraining them. Law enforcement and punishment will only go so far in solving the problem. The true solution lies in a lifelong self-improvement program such as I have proposed. It's called Quality Driving Circles or QDCs. These are small groups of 6 to 10 drivers meeting regularly and helping one another carry out self-improvement activities. I recommend the threestep program.

Claudio Cordovil: What is the efficacy of psychotherapeutic-like techniques in order to deal with that problem? What is the approach that you recommend?

Leon James: You can't give everybody psychotherapy. Besides, aggressive driving is normal. Part of our socialization process. Now we need to change that socialization process.

Claudio Cordovil: Can it be seen as a symptom of society's growing loss of community, a decay of moral values?

Leon James: People need to realize that the opposite of aggressive driving is supportive driving. This means seeing it as a community task, not as a war or competitive sport. With a teamwork orientation, driving can be a community builder by everyone being nice to each other, just as in a family. We can switch if we make it into a national and educational priority.

Legal Aspects of Driving

Due Regard

- An ambulance driver must operate his ambulance with due regard for the safety of others.
- The definition of Due Regard is:
- "Enough notice of approach, before a collision is inevitable"
- What situations would not be "due regard"?

What is Due Regard?

- As far as legal definitions go, "due regard" is hard to define. "Enough" time is hard to define, especially since it changes depending on the season, current conditions, etc.
- Winter -- windows up, heater on, radio on, talking on cell phone
- Summer -- A/C on, windows up, radio on, etc

Lights/Sirens & Due Regard

- When judging your use of lights and sirens in a legal case, the courts will look at, among other things:

- Was it necessary to use the RLS
- Were all the proper signals used
- Were they CLEARLY visible to the public
- You will be judged by the standard of negligence we just talked about

Slowing Drivers Who Speed Through Town Traffic

Planners Propose Narrow Streets to Promote Safety

May 22, 2000

By Mercedes Diaz

NEW YORK (APBnews.com) – Traffic safety experts say those narrow, tree-lined streets that wend their way through neighborhoods around the country can be effective in slowing down speeding drivers.

Some traffic safety advocates are now calling for a narrowing of roadways throughout cities as a way to promote safety for motorists and pedestrians.

But other traffic safety experts disagree. They say that narrowing wide streets may endanger lives by increasing the number of traffic accidents.

(...)

But there may be a downside to the street-narrowing proposals, said J.L. Gattis, an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of Arkansas. The results of his study, published earlier this year in the Journal of Transportation Engineering, conclude that narrowing streets does not necessarily slow down traffic or make the streets safer.

Motorists tend to drive fast on arterials, then gradually slow down as they travel through local streets.

"If all the streets are narrow, the developer is going to spend less. But if there are accidents, the cost is going to be borne by the residents," Gattis said.

(...)

If the street is too narrow and "you park a car on the street, then a fire truck can't get by," he said.

Walter Morris, a supervisor at the Rockland County Fire Training Center in New York state, said the international fire safety code dictates that streets be built to allow a minimum of 20 to 25 feet of access. That way, said Morris, if a fire truck is parked in front of a structure, a second truck can safely pass around it.

(...)

Engineers on both sides of the issue agree that the debate is just in its infancy. And on both sides of the issue, there have been accusations of being pro-car or anti-car.

(...)

Date: Mon, 5 Feb 2001 18:33:46 -1000

From: SpinFast78@aol.com

To: DrDriving@DrDriving.org

Subject: Public should know more about EMS driving...

DrDriving,

I am an active member and driver for my local volunteer EMS. After being cut off by a driver last Saturday while proceeding to an overturn MVA with my lights and siren going, enough time was wasted for me to be too late.

Fortunately, a FDNY bus was on scene shortly before we arrived, but if they were not backing us up the outcome would have been far worse. Your site, including "Emergency Vehicles: The Rules of the Road for Motorists" , was found to be most helpful. If I remember correctly, instructions similar to these were never made clear years ago when I attained my driver's licence from New York State DOT. They should have. I am forwarding this site to everyone I know. Thanks for adding this important piece of information to your site.

Matt Arbaszewski
LNDCAC