Avoid the Six Most Unsafe Driving Behaviors

Unsafe Driving Behavior #1: Improper Speed
Remember: For every 10 mph (16 kph) over 50 mph (80 kph), the risk of death in a traffic crash is doubled.

Tips:
› Know the speed limit.
› Assess the driving conditions, and adjust vehicle speed if required.
› Allow enough time to reach your destination.
› Keep checking the speedometer.
› Always reduce speed in work zones or school zones.
› Drive in the far right lane or in the lane where other vehicles are traveling at the same speed (or within the speed limit).

If a vehicle is tailgating you, slow down to encourage the vehicle to pass. Don’t speed up.

Unsafe Driving Behavior #2: Violating Right of Way
Violations include:
› Failure to yield
› Disregarding a traffic signal
› Passing a stop sign

Speeding and driving too fast for conditions often contribute to right-of-way violations.

When it comes to right of way, the reality is that the law gives no driver the right of way. Traffic regulations only state who must yield the right of way.

How to scan the intersection:
› Look left.
› Look straight ahead.
› Look right.
› Scan back left again.

This technique will delay your acceleration by two seconds and help ensure the intersection is clear before you enter it. Never mind the horn blowers behind you—they are not the ones going through the intersection first.

Unsafe Driving Behavior #3: Driving Left of Center
Tips to avoid it:
› Scan ahead for debris or obstructions in the road or highway.
› Adjust driving speed to the condition of the road.
› Make safe and legal turns.
› Stay behind pedestrians and cyclists until there’s room enough to pass safely.
› Scan ahead for animals.

Unsafe Driving Behavior #4: Turning Improperly
How to turn RIGHT:
› Get into position to turn: Keep the vehicle close to the curb or road shoulder to prevent smaller vehicles, pedestrians, or bicyclists from moving into the area between the vehicle and the curb. Check to make sure the right blind spot is clear of vehicles or pedestrians.
› Signal to let other drivers know what you are doing—use your turn signals! Traffic laws differ on how many feet before the turn you need to signal. It’s usually within 100 feet.
› Yield to pedestrians or vehicles in the intersection.
› Turn into the appropriate lane without crossing into other lanes.

How to turn LEFT:
› Making a left turn is done in much the same way as turning right, but here’s an extra tip: If we have to wait for oncoming traffic to clear before turning, it is important to keep the wheels pointed straight ahead. If we are stopped and have turned the wheels, we may be pushed into oncoming traffic if a driver behind rear-ends us.

Unsafe Driving Behavior #5: Passing Improperly
How to Make a Safe Pass:

Step 1: Maintain proper following distance.
› Use the three-second following distance rule.
› Look ahead; look behind.
› Signal left.
› Check blind spots.

Step 2: Move left into the passing lane.
› Move left completely into the passing lane.
› Increase speed, but not over the speed limit.
› Signal return to the right lane.
› Check your blind spot on the right before moving

Step 3: Complete the pass.
› Move right.
› Cancel the signal.
› Maintain proper speed.

Unsafe Driving Behavior #6: Following Too Closely
Three factors affect how long it takes a vehicle to stop:

Perception distance is the distance the vehicle travels during perception time (from the moment the event occurs—such as when the brake lights ahead come on—until the driver sees it and becomes aware of the danger).

Reaction distance is the distance the vehicle travels while the driver is moving his or her foot from the accelerator to the brake.

Braking distance is the distance the vehicle travels from the time the brake is applied until the vehicle stops.