

Avoid Heated Moments behind the Wheel

Don't Be a Victim or the Cause of Road Rage

Road construction delays, soaring gas prices and traffic that seems to never let up are only a few reasons that spark moments of frustration and even aggression in drivers. Aggressive drivers, the ones who tailgate, cut others off, run red lights, honk their horns, yell or make obscene gestures, are a danger to themselves and others. If you are an aggressive driver, or should you come into contact with one, your safety and that of your passengers and others on the road is seriously compromised.

Stress from off-the-road situations such as problems at work, the loss of a job, a divorce, or the death of a loved one can trigger road rage, even in a person who normally practices safe driving habits.

“Aggressive driving can affect anyone. Even drivers who are usually calm can get angry or frustrated and act out those feelings in dangerous ways,” says local agent Eric Nier. “In addition, poor traffic conditions such as crowded roads and traffic jams can be the ‘last straw’ for a driver who is already stressed or upset.”

To protect yourself and others from the hazards of aggressive driving, Eric Nier Insurance recommends the following:

- **Don't drive when angry**—Take time to cool off. Go for a walk, breathe deeply, talk to someone, or, if you're already driving, pull over and wait until your heart rate and breathing have slowed before getting back on the road.
- **Think positively about driving**—Take pride in driving safely and always consider how your driving might affect others.
- **Chill out**—Listen to soothing music, allow plenty of time to reach your destination, avoid traffic jams or choose less busy roads, and keep up with traffic and weather reports to learn of delays or hazards.
- **Give 'em a break**—If a driver goes too slowly, hesitates at an intersection, or annoys you in some other way, don't lose your temper. The driver may have good reason for his or her behavior. When another driver is being aggressive, keep your cool.
- **Let it pass**—Move to another lane when you can and let the other driver pass.
- **Avoid eye contact**—The driver of the other vehicle may take your look as a challenge and become even more aggressive.
- **Go to a safe place if you are followed**—Drive to the nearest police station, gas station, or other safe haven with plenty of people. If you have a cell phone, call the police with details or the incident including the aggressive driver's license plate number.