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## **Forego Aggressive Driving and Arrive Alive**

Aggressive driving is defined as the operation of a motor vehicle in a fashion that endangers or is likely to endanger people or property. Here in the United States, each year thousands of traffic accidents and associated fatalities are caused in part by aggressive driving. Showing little regard for others, most aggressive drivers operate their vehicles as if they were the only drivers on the road. They are not; but they may be the most dangerous.

If you make the decision to speed, tailgate or cut off another vehicle, you may be committing an act of aggressive driving. Other aggressive driving actions that should be avoided are blocking other drivers who wish to pass, and weaving in and out of traffic. Some acts of aggressive driving may not even be driving activities at all. Flashing your headlights, repeatedly honking your horn, improper hand gestures, and yelling are all examples of poor driving behavior. Your responsibility as a careful driver is to abstain from all of these behaviors, and think about safety first.

Just as important as avoiding aggressive driving yourself, as a safe driver, you need to avoid contact with aggressive drivers whenever possible. If you do encounter an aggressive driver, the best plan of action is to get out of their way. Don't ever retaliate. It could make the situation far worse for you and those around you. It is a good idea to create some space between you and an aggressive motorist and to avoid eye contact with the driver.

Another aspect of safe driving is to practice what you preach. Relax and enjoy the ride as you obey the speed limit and other rules of the road. Exercise courtesy and patience with other drivers, remembering that some may be new drivers still learning the ropes. Be realistic about your travel time and, if possible, allow yourself extra time to reach your destination. Avoid congested or construction areas whenever possible, and factor in delays that may be caused by inclement weather.

Driving is not a contest. It is a privilege that demands responsible actions. Choose to show other drivers, pedestrians and bike riders the respect they deserve. Learn to share the road. Give other drivers the benefit of the doubt. They may be lost, in a hurry or distracted by a problem they are facing. Learn to take the high road, make careful decisions, and arrive alive!