A Vital Defensive Driving Technique â€“ Signal Intent!

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A key aspect of defensive driving techniques is to signal your intent when you are out on the road. This means communicating to other drivers what you are about to do. As a first step it is essential that all lights that help you communicate to other drivers are functioning. Indicators, brake lights, head lights and other driving lights must be in good order. It's almost impossible to adopt a defensive driving attitude if other drivers have got no idea what you intend to do.

Indicate Your Intentions Early

When changing lanes, turning or undertaking some other manouvre that others may not expect, use your indicator early, that is before you make your move, rather than late or not at all. Mind reading is not really part of defensive driving techniques. Even if you think you are a mind reader, other drivers are usually not. Your indicators should tell other drivers what you are going to do in advance, not to disguise or acknowledge the manouvre you have just completed!

Be Predictable

Apply your defensive driving techniques by being clear with your indicators and move according to your signal. Don't suddenly change your mind and act in a way that confuses other drivers. Don't indicate a left turn and then turn right or vice versa. Make sure your indicators cancel after your manouvre so you don't drive for miles with a meaningless signal that only confuses other traffic.

Know Where You Are Going

Knowing where you are going may not be something you consider as part of defensive driving techniques, but neither is getting lost. Getting lost results not only in confusing yourself, but also in confusing others as you make sudden or false moves trying to find your destination. Slowing down, then speeding up again without indicating is hazardous. If you get lost, indicate correctly to an appropriate place to stop and consult your street directory or map, or ask someone for directions. Driving around aimlessly forms no part of defensive driving techniques.

Always Signal

As part of driving defensively, it is a good habit to always signal your intent, particularly when making lane changes or turns. Even on a an apparently lonely road at night it is good practice to signal your intent.

Slowing Down

A key aspect of defensive driving techniques is slowing down or stopping. You can warn following drivers of your intent to slow down or stop by tapping the brake pedal once or twice to flash your brake lights. The flash of the brake lights will alert following drivers to what you intend and this is particularly important if a following driver is approaching quickly.

Signalling your intent early and clearly is a key to staying out of trouble on the road. Being predictable is not only part of your armoury of defensive driving techniques, but also enables other drivers to know what you are doing. . This allows them to anticipate your moves and allows valuable time to adopt their own defensive driving tactics.

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