



PEACOCK GROUP SAFETY MEETING

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT: MAKING SMART DECISIONS
A Public Service Campaign for Safe and Alert Driving
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

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9 SAFETY TIPS TO HELP PROTECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

BEFORE YOU GET BEHIND THE WHEEL:

- 1) **HAVE A CLEAR HEAD.** Make sure you always have a clear head before deciding to operate a motor vehicle. Alcohol and certain drugs, both illegal and legal, can severely impair your driving skills. Many prescription and over the counter medications can cause dangerous drowsiness. Get a good night's rest and don't drive for long stretches without a break. If you are tired, don't risk the safety of yourself and others on the highway by trying to drive. Just as with alcohol — designate a driver or choose another means of transportation such as a taxi cab or public transportation.
- 2) **LIMIT DRIVING ALONE WHEN TIRED.** Driving with someone else in the car can increase your overall alertness. It is well recognized that when driving alone, especially when sleep deprived and at night, your chances of a crash are dramatically increased.
- 3) **READ THE LABELS.** If you are taking any medications, be sure to read and obey the warning labels. If the label says the medication causes drowsiness or not to drive — heed the warning and don't drive. The warnings are there for a reason. Consult with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions or to ask about medications for your condition that don't cause drowsiness.
- 4) **PLAN AHEAD.** Allow yourself plenty of extra time to reach your destination and allow for emergencies or traffic jams. In today's busy world most of us are in a hurry to get where we are going. By allowing extra time we can be more relaxed when operating our vehicles and thereby cut down on the incidences of road rage, such as excessive speeding, tailgating and weaving in and out between cars.
- 5) **RESEARCH SAFETY FEATURES.** Safety should always be a top priority when shopping for a vehicle. Research the safety performance of any vehicle you are considering buying including how the vehicle performs in crash tests. Both driver and passenger side air bags are now mandatory in all new cars. Look for side impact bags in many new models as well. When buying a used vehicle, look for one with air bags. Research what type of safety systems are in the car and choose the safest to protect you and your loved ones in the event of a collision.

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT:

- 6) **RELAX.** Avoid aggressive driving by relaxing and having patience. By not being in such a rush to reach your destination you will be a calmer person and won't need to speed and run red lights. A yellow light means slow down, not speed up. Always stop at red lights.
- 7) **BE ALERT TO SIGNS OF FATIGUE.** If you start to feel tired when driving pull over in a safe area and let someone else drive. If you are alone, pull into a safe location such as a well lit rest stop and take a short nap or get out of the car and walk around for a few minutes. Stop as often as necessary. When traveling on long trips, eat light. Large, heavy meals can make you drowsy.
- 8) **PRACTICE COMMON SENSE SAFETY RULES.** Always wear your safety belt and make sure all your passengers are buckled properly, even on short trips. If traveling with children, educate yourself on the many kinds of child safety seats and restraints. Choose which system is best for your child and always follow the directions. Make sure children ages 12 and under are always buckled up in the back seat, the safest place to ride.
- 9) **KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD.** Avoid taking your eyes off the road by eliminating any possible distractions ahead of time. Before setting out on a drive, be sure that important items are within easy reach, i.e. directions and maps, sunglasses, etc. Reduce to a minimum possibly dangerous diversions of your attention from the tasks of safe driving such as changing tapes or compact discs and always pull over to a safe place to use your cellular telephone.

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