



Safety Tips Sheet No. 3: *Driving Defensively to Reduce the Risk of a Motor Vehicle Crash*

This is the third in a series of Safety Tips Sheets developed by the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) concerning the four major hazards identified through our OSHA-PLANET Alliance. This Safety Tips Sheet is available in both English and Spanish.

Defensive driving can save your life

- Landscape and lawn care crew members and others in our industry often spend a long time on the road driving from job site to job site.
- Defensive driving starts from the minute you get behind the wheel — and can save your life.
- Always be alert to the hazards around you, including changing weather conditions, poor road conditions, children darting into traffic, and the actions of other drivers.
- Driving defensively means taking every possible precaution to avoid an accident, despite the hazards around you.

Defensive driving tips

- Always inspect your vehicle before a trip. Make sure trailers are securely hitched, tires are properly inflated, and loads are securely tied down. This will help you focus on your *driving* once you are on the road.
- Always stay alert. If you start to feel sleepy, pull over to the side of the road and take a break when you can safely do so.
- Anticipate hazards so you can take action *before* you encounter a hazard. For example, if you are on a wet, slippery road and an upcoming traffic light has been green for some time, assume it will be red by the time you reach the intersection and begin slowing down well in advance.
- Keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you.
- Let problem drivers move ahead of you. Do not challenge them.

More safe driving tips

- *Always* wear your seat belt.
- Eliminate or reduce hazards whenever possible. Make sure that no loose items are on your dashboard or by your feet, or that loads are not piled too high.
- Do not use a cell phone or other electronic device when driving.
- *Never* drive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Know that even some prescription and over-the-counter medications can make you sleepy behind the wheel.
- Avoid such distractions as eating, drinking, or changing CDs.