

WHEN OTHER DRIVERS TAKE FOOLISH RISKS

People take a lot of unnecessary risks on the highways. Much research has been done to find out why they do it, and it's apparent that there are many different reasons. But, for you, as a professional driver, the reason's unimportant. Your job is to stay one step ahead of the other drivers and to protect yourself and your cargo from the dangers they may pose.

The Young and the Old

Teenagers have quick reflexes but they tend to act impulsively. Often, they drive recklessly. Many still believe that nothing can hurt them. In addition, they're easily influenced by their peers. Remember that they are inexperienced and, in many cases, immature.

Older drivers fall at the opposite end of the spectrum. They have slower reflexes, as well as diminished sight and hearing, and often tend to drive more slowly. This is good, up to a point, but as they get older, their very caution often becomes a hazard in itself.

The Angry

Unfortunately, there are lots of angry drivers on the road these days. Many are consumed with personal problems, frustrations and the demands of daily life. They are easily upset by other drivers' actions. Quite likely, many are angry before they get in their vehicles.

Angry drivers may act as if they're the only ones on the road. They fail to use their turn signals, pull out into traffic without checking to see who's coming and are likely to tailgate. They're so eager to set things straight that they'll vent their spleen on anyone. They're aggressive, and their judgment is often clouded.

This behavior sets off a vicious cycle that, in turn, makes other drivers angry. Soon someone else is trying to get back at them and it goes on and on.

The Drunk and the Drugged

Alcoholics and other drug abusers may be the most dangerous people on the road. Over 50 percent of all traffic fatalities involve a drinking driver. Their mental capacities and coordination don't function properly.

Their reflexes are slow. They may have difficult performing the most elementary driving tasks

and, often, they simply don't realize they're driving dangerously and erratically. They think, in fact, that



Watch out for distracted drivers.

they're doing just fine.

Proper Measures

Learn to spot these risky drivers and keep your distance. Don't let them goad you into being a risky driver yourself.

If anyone fights you for the right-of-way, let him have all the room he needs. If a young warrior challenges you to a test of wills, laugh it off and go your merry way. When others are obnoxious, be a model of highway chivalry.

But don't let the high-risk drives go unnoticed, either. Be quick to report unduly reckless motorists--especially if they appear to be driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Use your CB, or the telephone, to all authorities and get these dangerous people off the road immediately. After all, they are potential killers. Consider it your duty to yourself and your fellow drivers to rid the highways of these menaces.

Be Defensive

In any given week, you're going to see more than your share of bad judgment on the road. That's why defensive driving is no necessary. In any high-risk situation, simply do what you have to do to stay safe. Be calm and be on your way. That's the smart approach.