

# Connecticut State Police

## TIPS

### Topics in Public Safety

## AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

Aggressive driving is widespread on local roads and highways both in Connecticut and across the country. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) defines aggressive driving as occurring when “an individual commits a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property.”

The problem of aggressive driving appears to contribute to collisions, injuries and fatalities on Connecticut roads. Those who drive aggressively create an unsafe environment as they try to make up time or get ahead of others on the road.



There is a distinct difference between aggressive driving and road rage. Road rage is defined by the NHTSA as “an assault with a motor vehicle or other dangerous weapon by the operator or passenger(s) of one motor vehicle on the operator or passenger(s) of another motor vehicle or is caused by an incident that occurred on a roadway.” Road rage is a criminal offense while aggressive driving is a traffic offense.

### Signs of an aggressive driver:

- Changes lanes frequently, abruptly or unnecessarily.
- Distracted by cell phone conversation, eating, music, etc.
- Uses high beams to push a driver aside.
- Speeds and tailgates.
- Rushes yellow lights, runs red lights.
- Expresses frustration while driving.
- Uses obscene hand gestures.

### To reduce aggressive driving:

- Concentrate on driving. Do not become distracted by talking on your cell phone, eating, drinking or personal hygiene.
- Drive the posted speed limit.
- Plan your trip and identify alternate, less congested routes.
- Leave ample travel time and anticipate delays.
- Use public transportation to give yourself a break from driving.
- On longer trips, never remain behind the wheel for more than three hours without a break.
- Read highway warning and construction signs. Listen to the radio for alternate routes, accidents and traffic delays.
- Reduce tension by increasing ventilation in the car and listening to calming music.

### To avoid aggressive drivers:

- Get out of the way.
- Put your pride aside. Do not challenge them by speeding up or attempting to hold your own in your travel lane.
- Avoid eye contact, which can sometimes enrage an aggressive driver.
- Ignore gestures and refuse to return them.
- Report serious aggressive driving. If possible, obtain a marker plate number and contact police as soon as possible.



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