

DEFENSIVE DRIVING BASICS WHEN THE OTHER DRIVER IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Have you ever had to share the road with a driver who was under the influence of alcohol or drugs? Perhaps the car in front of you or behind you was weaving back and forth and changing speed suddenly, or ignoring traffic signals. How can you defend yourself against impaired driving?

Get Out of the Way

The first defense against drivers under the influence is to get out of the way and stay out of the way. The second is to be ready to take evasive action.

If you spot an impaired driver in front of you, maintain a safe following distance. Don't try to pass because the driver may swerve into you.

If the driver is behind you, turn right at the nearest intersection and let the driver pass.

When an impaired driver is coming toward you from the opposite direction, slow down and move right, off the road if necessary.

Be Ready for the Unexpected

Slow down at intersections, look both ways, and be ready to take evasive action. Don't assume having the right of way will protect you against a driver who is under the influence. Be especially alert late at night and on weekend evenings when many people are drinking. Always wear your safety belt.

If you see a driver who seems to be under the influence, Texas Department of Public Safety has a toll free number: (800) 525-5555. Try to provide the vehicle's license plate, make, model, location and driving direction. You'll be doing everyone, including the impaired driver, a favor.

Signs of an impaired driver include:

- Erratic speed
- Driving unreasonably fast or slow
- Jerky starts or stops
- Ignoring other traffic
- Approaching a signal too fast or too slow
- Swerving or driving too close to center or shoulders
- Improper and dangerous passing
- Driving with windows open in cold weather