

ADVERTISING FEATURE

# WHEELS

## The aggressive driver is not always someone else — it could be you

(NC) At one time or another, motorists may find themselves in unpleasant situations involving abusive gestures or language from another motorist who takes issue with how they drive.

There has been substantial interest in the phenomenon described as road rage.

This term is often used by the media to describe aggressive driving. It is important to emphasize that these two terms refer to very different behaviours.

### INCIDENTS OF ROAD RAGE GENERALLY INVOLVE THE USE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE AS A WEAPON AND CAN RESULT IN INJURY OR DEATH.

Aggressive driving refers to driving behaviours or habits that endanger other road users. They include speeding, tailgating, running red lights, improper lane changes and more.

In some instances, aggressive driving can lead to road rage incidents.

Aggressive drivers are not necessarily people with aggressive personalities. The vast majority of these drivers do not intend to cause harm to other motorists.

However, it is the way they drive that increases the likelihood of a collision.

Based on U.S. research, road rage refers to violent exchanges between motorists stemming from real or imagined disputes over parking spaces, inconsiderate driving practices and minor collisions.

Incidents generally involve the use of a motor vehicle as a weapon and can result in injury or death.

Collisions and associated injuries and deaths are preventable. If people drive responsibly, they will reduce the chances of conflict on the road and help make our roads safer.

Experts provide these tips to help motorists avoid road conflicts.

- Plan your route in advance. Some of the most erratic and inconsiderate driving occurs when motorists are lost.

- Make a conscious decision not to take your problems with you when driving.

- Combat the warning signs of stress by getting fresh air and breathing deeply and slowly. Listen to relaxing music.

- Avoid long drives if you can. If you take a long trip, stop every few hours for a rest. Before and during a long drive, avoid heavy meals which tend to make a person lethargic.

- Drive in a courteous and considerate manner. Give way at busy intersections or where traffic lanes merge. Wherever there is merging traffic, follow the rule — let one in and go.

- Don't compete or retaliate. If someone's driving annoys you, don't try to educate them. Leave traffic enforcement to the police.

- Don't take other drivers' mistakes personally.

- Avoid honking your horn unless absolutely necessary and, if you must, tap on it lightly.

- Say I'm sorry if you made the mistake. An apology can reduce the risk of

- conflict.
- If you are being physically threatened, stay in your car and lock the doors.

- If you have a cell phone, call the police. Use your horn and lights to attract attention.

- If you think you are being followed, do not drive home. Go to a police station or a busy public place.

Remember, the aggressive driver is not always the other driver. It could be you. Drive with care, courtesy and control and help make our roads safer.

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