

Street Smarts – Safe Driving

In general, it's wise to review basic safety precautions with your employees and any volunteers who will be traveling into unknown and potentially risky territory to deliver services, run errands or conduct other mission-critical activities. These reminders may seem obvious to some, but others may have never considered them. By instructing everyone at the same time, you can ensure that the rules of the street savvy have been reviewed, and that everyone is operating under the same guidelines. We offer the following checklists for consideration when you are concerned about staff working in the field.



Heading Out

Before you go out on a trip:

1. Learn about the area and what precautions you should take.
2. Map your route.
3. Make sure your cell phone battery or pager is fully charged.
4. Leave a complete itinerary with the appropriate contact at your organization, including an expected return time.
5. Leave valuables at your home, or locked in your office or your vehicle's trunk.
6. Separate your house keys and vehicle keys.

Pre-Trip Inspection

If you are driving to your assignment in your own vehicle or the organization's vehicle:

1. Ensure that the vehicle is well-maintained and safety equipment is working properly (e.g. the headlights and brake lights work, the wiper blades clean without smearing, the horn honks, the brakes slow and stop the vehicle, and the tires have treads, etc.).
2. Ensure that the fuel tank is at least half way full.
3. Keep the doors locked.
4. Keep the windows rolled up whenever possible.
5. Adjust your driving speed to weather conditions (slippery surfaces, poor visibility, bridges that freeze before roadways).
6. Watch the roads carefully. In urban areas, check for potholes, unlit areas, broken glass and debris, dead ends and roadblocks. In rural areas, watch for narrow, winding roads with no shoulder, animals in the roadway, and unpaved roads.
7. Seasonal issues: flooding streams; avalanches of snow, rocks or mud; or amorous animals (moose, deer, and elk) lured to the roadway.
8. Keep your vehicle in gear while waiting at traffic signals and stop signs. If approached or threatened, honk your horn and drive away.
9. Drive in the lane closest to the center of the road to give yourself maneuvering room.
10. Leave enough space between your vehicle and the vehicle in front to permit you to go around it quickly, if necessary.

Parking Tips

When parking your vehicle:

1. Park as close to the entrance as legally possible (under a street light at night).
2. Avoid parking next to vans, campers or trucks that could conceal someone from your view.
3. Back into slots in an underground garage or parking lot.
4. Engage the parking brake.
5. Have exact change for parking meters (but don't keep change in your vehicle).
6. Take the parking lot ticket with you.
7. Check your surroundings before unlocking the door; if anyone strikes you as suspicious, don't get out of the vehicle.
8. Don't leave keys in the ignition.
9. Don't leave a spare key hidden in or on the vehicle.
10. Don't leave packages or briefcases, etc., on vehicle seats; they're only a temptation to break in and steal.
11. Lock your vehicle.

When Trouble Materializes

When you have vehicle trouble:

1. Drive to a busy, well-lit street, if possible.
2. Engage the parking brake and turn on the vehicle's flashing lights.
3. If you have a cell phone, call for assistance (the police, a towing service, a friend or colleague).
4. Wait inside your vehicle with the windows rolled up and the doors locked until the person you called arrives.
5. Never leave with an unknown person to seek help. Instead, through a closed window, ask the person to call a towing service or the police.

When You Are Fearful

If you think someone is following you while driving:

1. Keep driving until you find a safe area: the nearest police or fire station or an open gasoline station or grocery store where you can call the police.
2. While driving to the safe area, attract attention to yourself by honking your horn in short blasts and by turning on the flashers.
3. Don't drive home, pull into a driveway, or pull over anywhere that you could be trapped.
4. Try to record the license number, color, make and type of vehicle and report it to the police.

Stay Safe

When returning to your vehicle:

1. Carry your keys in your hand.
2. Note occupied vehicles around you.
3. Check under the vehicle and in its interior to ensure that nobody is hiding there before you enter.
4. Lock the doors as soon as you enter the vehicle.

For more information on personal driving safety, please contact LBailey@alliantinsurance.com