



## PREDICTIVE DRIVING

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As a professional driver, defensive driving is a topic that is common in most safety programs. There are commercial programs available for purchase. Many motor carriers even write their own, both of which are great.

A different approach to defensive driving is called Predictive Driving.” The skill which any professional driver, or ANY driver for that matter, must develop to be a good defensive driver and avoid crashes is figuring out what the cars and trucks around them might do. This is “predictive driving.” They must essentially predict the future and have positive responses and actions ready to prevent a crash IF the other driver does what they predicted.

It's not an easy thing to do and it is a skill that must be practiced and perfected. Drivers must be FULLY engaged in the process of driving to be an effective predictive driver. ALL distractions must be avoided that can reduce complete attention to the driving environment.

To make these predictions, you must mentally or verbally describe the actions and possible negative outcomes of every vehicle around your vehicle. An example of a prediction is:

*A vehicle is speeding up and slowing down or not holding steady in their lane. This would lead most drivers to “predict” that the other vehicle was using their smartphone. A valid response to this prediction would be to slow down and get away from the vehicle to avoid a crash.*

Most drivers who have earned million-mile or more safe driving recognition are usually the best predictive drivers. It takes work, and if you ask any million-mile driver, they will tell you it is not easy and requires focus and dedication to the “craft” of being a professional driver.

Think about your predictive driving skill level. Every driver and vehicle we share the road with has the potential to affect you and the vehicles around you.

A predictive driver has to have a “negative” outlook, as most of the predictions revolve around things other drivers may do wrong that could cause a crash. We should live our lives as positively as we can, but to be a good predictive driver, we must ALWAYS be prepared for the worst thing that can happen around the vehicle.

This approach to safe driving and avoiding crashes will have you constantly prepared to deal with whatever happens around the vehicle. If it doesn't, that's okay, but if it does, you can help avoid a crash.

Being a predictive driver is the right thing to do and will help you maintain your safe driving record.



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