

(Article)

## AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS

Have you ever been cut off by another driver or waited your turn to merge only to have someone recklessly speed up and take your turn? How did you feel? Did you get angry and want to show that person that you would not put up with that kind of treatment? We have all been there, done that at some point...we have been an aggressive driver. According to Ricardo Martinez, M.D., former administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, aggressive driving is on the rise in America.

Who, besides you and me, are the aggressive drivers? Studies show that the majority of perpetrators are males between the ages of 18 and 26. That does not leave out other age categories. There is no typical profile of an "aggressive driver."

What causes aggressive driving? The triggering incidents are often pretty trivial. Some reasons for these violent traffic disputes include arguments over parking spaces, cutting another motorist off or refusing to allow passing, minor traffic crashes, obscene gestures, loud music, overuse of the horn, slow driving, tailgating, failure to use a turn signal, and similar behaviors. These disputes are rarely the result on a single incident, but rather are the cumulative result of a series of stressors in the motorist's life. It is often just the last straw.

An attitude adjustment is needed by all drivers. Assume other drivers' mistakes are not personal, be polite and courteous, even if the other driver is not, and avoid conflict. If another driver challenges you, take a deep breath and get out of the way.

While adjusting your attitude, reduce your stress. Allow plenty of time for your trip and try listening to soothing music, improve the comfort in your vehicle, and most importantly understand that you cannot control the traffic, only your reaction to it.

Remember, your car is not a tank, it is not bullet proof, and the truly aggressive driver may follow you home. And finally, is an impulsive action worth ruining the rest of your life?

*Source:* AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety and The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration