

Hudson Valley

Keep Calm and Drive On



We've all been there. Trying to merge onto a busy freeway with no one willing to let us in. Stuck behind a slow-moving vehicle when we're late for an appointment. Taken off guard by a driver looking at their phone as they swerve into our lane. Someone not giving us the right of way. A car abruptly turns without signaling.

Is your blood pressure bubbling already? While it's normal to feel frustrated behind the wheel, letting your emotions get the better of you, or worse, snowball into road rage, can be incredibly dangerous.

The next time you or someone you love gets in the driver's seat, remember that getting to your destination safely is your most important goal. Save the four-letter words, hand gestures, and hot-headedness for when you're not piloting a four-thousand-pound machine. You could save yourself costly traffic tickets, insurance rate hikes, driver's license points, hospital bills, and even lives.

Road Rage Dos and Don'ts

While it might take very little to push your buttons, it's up to you whether to let someone's annoying or careless behavior get the best of you behind the wheel. Stay in control. Next time you take to the road, remind yourself of these *Road Rage Do's & Don'ts* courtesy of Finkelstein & Partners, LLP The Injury Attorneys.

DO

Do imagine someone you love in the offending car, whether a family member, friend, or neighbor.

Could the driver you're dying to pass be a teen who has just learned to drive? What if they were your child?

Is the driver who rolled through the stop sign an older adult whose eyesight needs checking? Will honking or yelling at them make things better?

Have you ever gestured angrily to a nearby driver only to find out a few miles down the road you were headed to the same Little League game that your children are teammates on? Something about being inside a car can make us feel anonymous. Remember, we're all human.

Do follow the rules of the road, especially speed limits. They aren't recommendations, and remember that they are for *ideal* conditions – not fog, storms, snow, or ice. Nearly every wreck our clients are involved in relates to speed. Since 2020, U.S. roads have seen **drivers speeding at alarming rates and careening through intersections** with terrifying frequency.

Driving 100 miles at 80 mph versus 75 mph might save you 5 minutes, but it could also cost you dearly. Speed takes time away from making intelligent decisions. We can't say it enough: speed kills.

When we're emotional – perhaps provoked by someone's bad driving – there's a tendency to have a lead foot. Keep a cool head, lay off the gas pedal, and let off steam only once you get to where you're going (hopefully in a healthy way).

Do put your phone down. If you can, set it to automatically silence alerts when it detects driving speed. Studies show that distracted driving increases crash risk as surely as drinking alcohol.

Do let the tailgater pass you. Never brake or drive slowly to antagonize them. Let them go on their way.

DON'T

Don't engage someone's rage. If someone is badgering you on the road, don't react. That only escalates things. Bad behavior can be contagious. Refrain from yelling, honking your horn, or using hand gestures.

Don't take other driver's actions personally.

Might the person driving erratically be lost? Have you ever had to turn around?

Could the driver not letting you merge into their lane have just received bad news and be lost in thought? Is it possible it isn't intentional?

Don't make someone else's reckless driving your problem to fix. What if you feel they pose a threat to others on the road? Pull over at a safe location, call the police if you think it's necessary, give them a location marker, and let them take care of it. It's not your obligation to follow an erratic or impaired driver, and you could make the situation worse.

Keep Calm and Keep Your Cool

It's easier said than done, but with more and more older drivers on the road, the charged political climate, and our increasingly busy and demanding lives, it's more important than ever to practice your zen driving techniques and to share these reminders with any teen drivers in your life.

Should you wind up involved in a vehicular wreck caused by someone else's reckless driving you should seek legal counsel. Finkelstein & Partners, LLP has been successfully representing injured people in the Hudson Valley for over 60 years. Call us today at [800-529-2676](tel:800-529-2676) or [tell us about your situation using our online form](#) for a fast, free case evaluation.

What's this?

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