

Finkelstein & Partners attorney urges drivers to abide by the rules of the road.

By Alyssa Seidman

Whether we've experienced it firsthand or been the perpetrator ourselves, anyone who's driven a moving vehicle is familiar with road rage. And while these feelings of frustration may seem temporary at the time, they can have lasting legal impacts if left unchecked.

Finkelstein & Partners, LLP, has represented personal injury victims since its founding in 1959. The firm has offices throughout New York and New Jersey, including two locations in Albany. Elizabeth Wolff is a managing attorney at the Albany location on Central Avenue, and discussed the firm's familiarity with representing clients involved in car accidents.

"A significant percentage of the crashes we handle could have been prevented if people had been kinder to one another. You should not engage in rage while operating a 4,000-pound machine," she said. "The key is to stay in control and not let another driver's poor choices get to you. Just keep calm and follow the rules of the road."

For the past 10 years, Wolff has delivered powerful presentations at area high schools to spread awareness about making good choices behind the wheel. Last summer the firm developed a PSA to educate teen drivers about de-escalating incidences of road rage, which soon became apparent to share with drivers of every age.

"The world is a stressful place, and anyone driving has got a lot of competing distractions going on in their lives," Wolff said. "Since we're seeing an increase in the number of vehicles on the road, we felt the need to get this PSA out to every driver."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wL6eKHnVJ4w>

DOS AND DON'TS

Finkelstein & Partners recently published a list of dos and don'ts for drivers to follow to avoid escalating incidences of road rage. Wolff said the No. 1 thing drivers *should* do is disengage.

"When you feel that anger bubbling up inside you, imagine the person in the other car is



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someone you love or care about," she added. "It's also important to not take it personally. Another driver's actions are not necessarily an attack on you, so be the better person, take some deep breaths, and back off."

If an offending motorist is engaging in rude behavior or making you feel unsafe, Wolff said to pull over and dial 911. Any significant violations should be reported to the authorities since police officers are the only ones empowered to enforce the rules of the road, she added.

The No. 1 thing drivers *shouldn't* do when faced with road rage is egg it on, Wolff said.

"Our lives are so precious, and one wrong move can change everything," she added. "If you want to prevent a dangerous or fatal car crash you should avoid feeding that monster of anger. There's no place for it on the road."

Wolff said the best way to avoid incidences of road rage is to make a pact to follow the rules, and abandon the "me, me, me" mentality. By checking our egos before getting behind the wheel, and choosing kindness over selfishness, the roads will be a safer place to drive.

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