

Since the inception of ICRMP in 1985, our most frequent cause of Property/Casualty claims has been auto claims. No other claim category comes close. The bad news: auto crashes are frequent and severe for Idaho local government agencies. The good news is that auto crashes can be reduced by focusing on safe driving!

## The Driving Task

When you slide in behind the wheel of a motor vehicle, you take responsibility for the lives of people around you. To be a safe driver you must know the rules of the road and respect them. You also must know and follow proper driving procedures. Just as importantly, you must have a good attitude. Courtesy and consideration are essential to good driving.

Professional drivers will tell you it takes more than basic skills to make a good driver. After mastering those skills, a driver must learn the fine points of good driving - including the mental and physical conditions that affect performance on the road.

Driver error causes more than 90% of highway crashes. Your ability to drive safely depends not only on what you know, but how you feel and what you were doing before you sat behind the wheel.

## Your Mood Affects Your Driving

You should be aware of how getting behind the wheel can affect your behavior. Taking control of the power and speed of a car often reveals a person's character. You soon see whether you're inclined to be a bully, a thoughtless lawbreaker, or a reliable and courteous driver. To drive safely, you must find the maturity to share the road and help your fellow travelers.

If you are worried or distracted, you can't count on being alert enough to drive safely. Quarrels, misunderstandings, financial problems, illness in the family, personal fears or over-confidence make you far more likely to have an accident. If you are upset, let someone else drive.

Concentration is vital to safe driving. The driver's seat is no place for daydreaming, window shopping, intense conversation, or looking at scenery. There have been too many crashes after which the surviving driver said, "I don't know what happened."

*Source: From Idaho Drivers Manual (2014)*

### Discuss:

1. Have you driven when you know your mood affected your driving? What mood affected it?
2. Identify a friend or family member's driving character (bully, thoughtless lawbreaker, courteous driver). What do you think your driving character is?
3. Have you or someone you know ever had a "close call" because of their mood, being distracted, or lack of concentration?