DEALING WITH ROAD RAGE AND DISTRACTED DRIVING

Distracted driving
The term refers to situations in which a driver’s eyes, hands or mind are not fully focused on the task at hand – driving safely and responsibly. Ever tried to switch a CD or find a radio station while driving? Ever been so caught up in a conversation that you missed your turn – or worse, went through a red light? Most of us have been guilty of it ourselves.

Aggressive driving
Occasionally, drivers find themselves in unpleasant situations involving abusive gestures or language from other drivers who take issue with how you are driving. Some tailgate, others speed through intersections or fail to yield the right of way. Aggressive driving may lead to “road rage.” If people drive responsibly they will reduce the risks of conflict on the road and help make our roads safer!

The top 5 driver distractions
1. Outside person/object or event
2. Adjusting radio/cassette/CD
3. Other occupant
4. Unknown distraction
5. Object moving within the vehicle
The top 5 acts of aggressive driving
1. Tailgating or flashing high-beams
2. Passing on the shoulder
3. Speeding 20km over the limit
4. Getting frustrated in traffic
5. Making rude gestures

Tips to minimize aggression or distractions
• Always keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel.
• Don’t take other drivers’ mistakes personally.
• Plan your route in advance. Some of the most erratic and inconsiderate driving occurs when drivers are lost.
• Ensure children are properly buckled up.
• If you must use a cell phone, use a hands-free device.
• Don’t compete or retaliate.

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Source of information: COMPAS 2001; CANSTATS Bulletins; Canada Safety Council.