

DRIVING TUITION NEEDED

**“Periodic
Rant...”**

Driving Tuition Needed

Something needs to be done. Action is required. I have lived in America for almost twenty years and have watched as, gradually, driving standards have lowered. A lot of drivers in this country aren't qualified to be behind the wheel of a pedal car, let alone a vehicle with the capacity to kill, injure or maim other road users.

In 2010, 32,999 people were killed and over 2.2 million were injured.

In 2015, 38,300 people were killed and 4.4 million were injured and this was the largest one-year percentage increase in fifty years.

Something needs to be done, and it won't be achieved by lowering the speed limits, the usual way of things in America. Speed does not kill, bad driving does.

I have some proposals to make, from driving in this country and observing what really happens on the roads.

Let's take this examination in two parts. I believe the huge increase in deaths per year since 2010 is down to one major reason – texting on cellphones whilst people drive their cars. We've all seen it and been there. You're sitting at a traffic light when it changes from red to green. The car in front of you doesn't move. Why not? Because he/she is texting, that's why. After all, it's not illegal, at least not here in Florida. The same can be said for talking on our cellphones. Not quite as attention diverting as texting is but hey, when you're behind someone on the freeway and they suddenly slow down, what's the reason? As you pass them, you can see that they are on the phone. No people, you can't text or call people when you drive, it takes too much attention from the road ahead and around you.

Then there's the lack of lane discipline on freeways. Here are the rules. You join the freeway at or near to the posted speed limit. This means, in most cases, somewhere around seventy mph and this gives you the ability to merge in with the traffic already flowing. And no, you don't immediately indicate and pull into the middle lane, to block the faster traffic in that lane, you stay in the inside lane until it is safe for you to overtake the car or truck ahead of you, use your mirror to make sure that it is safe to overtake and only then should you indicate to pull out and pass the vehicle in front of you. No, you don't overtake and stay in the middle lane, you return to the inside lane. Passing lanes are on the outside of the traveling lanes and are not for normal traffic flow.

Today, we have the ridiculous fact that it is faster to drive in the inside lane on freeways because most drivers are hogging the center and outside lanes, although they are not supposed to. Why is all this happening? It is because of two things:

1. Ignorance. Driving education is appalling, and obviously, drivers are not being taught how to drive properly;
2. The Police do not, as far as I've ever seen, pull people over for bad driving/misuse of lanes. Yes, they'll stop you if you are speeding, presumably to top up the local City's coffers. The authorities are just not interested in lowering the death and injury rate on our roads, it might cost too much money and time to take it seriously.

So here's my suggestion. Everyone who wants to obtain a driving license must undertake a three-month course of driving education. I would suggest a minimum of thirty hours tuition and practice before drivers are allowed to have a provisional license. A full license will be granted one year later, as long as the driver has not been involved in any accidents. During this time, they will learn about how to drive their car and when to use their mirrors and indicators, how the traffic systems actually are meant to work and then learn how to control their vehicle when they lose control of it, usually by going faster than conditions allow. This means skid control.

Additionally, it would be a good idea to reopen vehicle inspection centers so that, once a year, drivers must take their vehicles (over three years old, I would suggest) to have brakes, suspension, lights and tires inspected. A fee would be charged so that the State would not lose money, indeed, they could actually be operated profitably.

And finally, so many drivers don't even bother to indicate when making a turn today, something that is a pet peeve with me. When out walking my dogs and standing at a crossroads, waiting to cross, and a vehicle is facing me, it would help if drivers indicated which way they intend to go...

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