

Friday 7 June 2019

ARE YOU A GOOD PASSENGER?

A passenger's behaviour is just as crucial as the driver's. The passenger has a responsibility to make sure that the driver remains focused on the road and resists the many temptations and distractions.

Here are some tips on how to be a good passenger.

Don't be a distraction – Talking to the driver can stimulate them mentally however talking too loudly, arguing, or singing annoyingly can be distracting, as can phone conversations. Make sure your behaviour is a help not a hindrance. Pay attention to the road so you can see when the driver may need to concentrate more and you could help by pausing the conversation or turning down the music.

Wear your seatbelt – Each year on average there are about 30 drivers and passengers killed and 220 injured who were not wearing available seatbelts. Put your seatbelt on as soon as you sit in the seat. Don't refuse to put it on. In addition to the possible penalties, it is important to understand that seat belts are one of the most effective safety devices for preventing death and injury. Remind the driver to use their seat belt if they forget.

Never block the driver's view – The driver needs to see out the passenger side and rear windows, as well as being able to use the mirrors. Sit back in your seat if you are in the front and try not to obscure their view if you are in the back seat.

Help the driver avoid distractions - Never encourage texting while driving. As a passenger you could read or send a text message for the driver. Make sure the driver is not using their phone illegally. You could also assist by offering to help navigate, give clear instructions with plenty of notice. Shouting instructions at the last minute can cause the driver to panic or act impulsively and possibly cause a crash.

Don't be a backseat driver - Do not attack the driver about their driving, especially if they are inexperienced, let them take their time and drive the way that is comfortable for them. Keep comments constructive and helpful.

Don't encourage unsafe driver behaviours – If a driver is speeding or driving unsafely ask the driver to slow down or drive more carefully. Do not tolerate drink or drug driving, convince them not to drive and have a Plan B for getting to your destination. Be a positive influence on the driver.

Stay calm – Even if the driver makes a mistake or you feel you are at risk you should remain calm. Loud noises or sudden movements can startle the driver and make the situation worse.

Don't use interior lights at night – The drivers night vision can be affected by interior lights. Similarly light emitted from phones and devices can be a distraction. Avoid using these when you are a passenger.

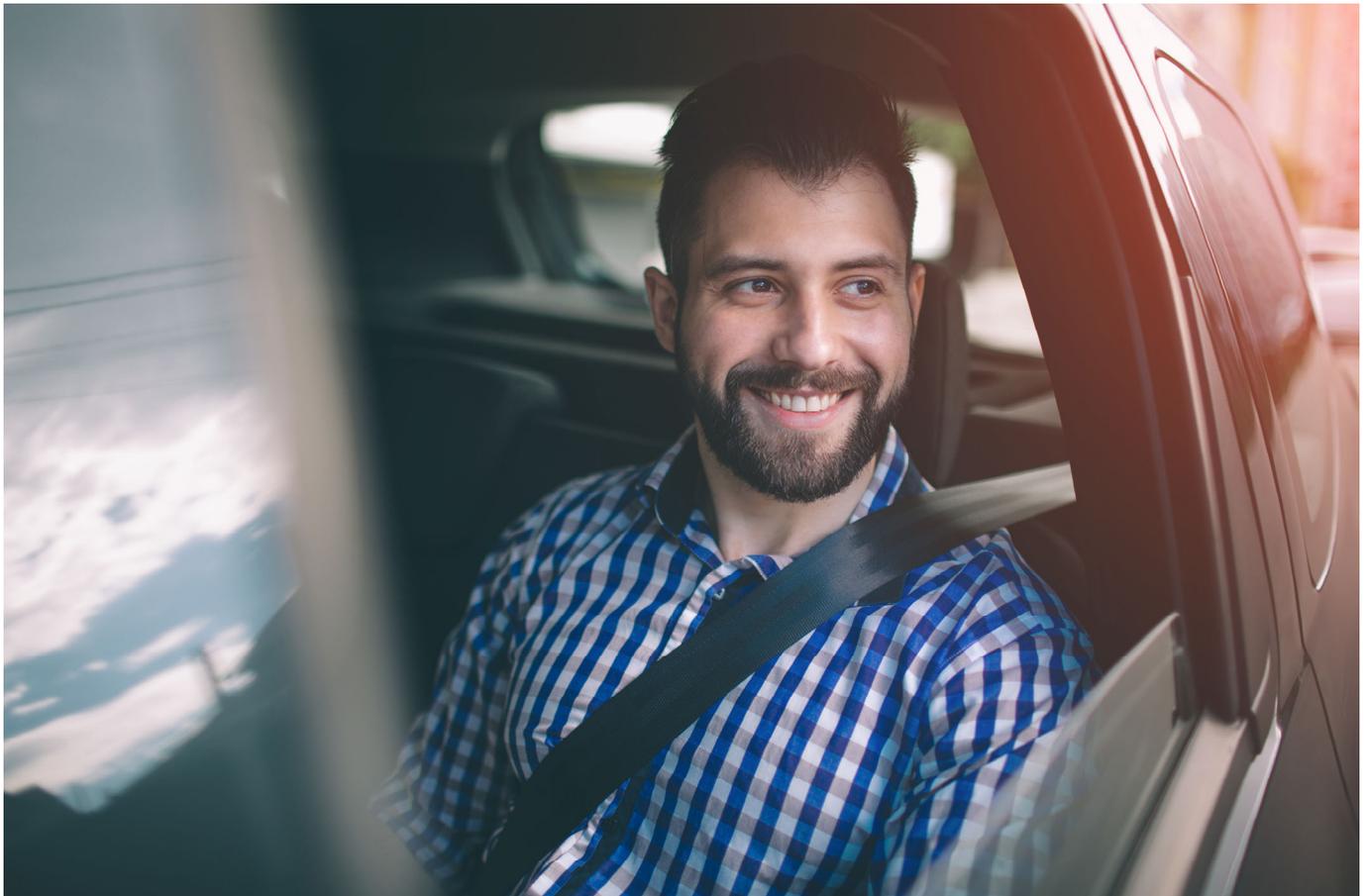
Encourage the driver to avoid fatigue – Make sure the driver stops for regular breaks and avoids driving after midnight. If you have the relevant licence offer to share the driving or suggest you stop for a sleep.

Keep your body parts in the right place – As well as being dangerous, it is an offence to have part of your body outside the vehicle's window or door (a possible \$337 fine for both the driver

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and the passenger). Feet should not be placed on the dashboard, especially when the vehicle has a passenger airbag.

Generally if you think about how you would like your passengers to behave in your car if you were the driver, this will put you in the driver's position and most likely make you more conscious about your actions while being a passenger yourself.



Always wear your seatbelt and don't distract the driver.

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