

Holiday Driving Behaviors: Are You 'Naughty' or 'Nice'?

No matter where your routes take you this holiday season (over the river and through the woods?), you'll likely run into more than just Santa Claus on his sleigh.

Last year, more than 113 million people traveled to visit family and friends between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day. If the same holds true this year, drivers can expect plenty of company on highways as they complete their routes.

Sharing the road means making an extra effort to drive safely. Check out these holiday season safety tips and take the right steps so you can make Santa's "nice" list and stay off of his bad side.

Naughty: Driving without a seat belt.

Nice: Buckling up at all times. It's the law and the professional thing to do.

Naughty: Picking up your cell phone to see the latest incoming text message while driving.

Nice: Putting your phone away and turning on "do not disturb" mode before you start your trip. Also, eliminating all other distractions (eating, drinking, etc.) while driving.

Naughty: Attending a holiday party and having a beer or two before your scheduled route.

Nice: Never drinking and driving — and staying alert to catch those that do. Impaired driving causes 39% of traffic-related deaths over the Christmas holiday and 49% of traffic-related deaths over the New Year's holiday, according to the [National Safety Council](#).

Naughty: Tailgating to intimidate other motorists to drive faster.

Nice: Keeping a safe following distance (about four seconds between you and the vehicle in front of you, per the [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#)). Leave an additional second if you're driving over 40 MPH, and always account for inclement weather and current road conditions.

Naughty: Rushing to get to your destination — or to get home.



Nice: Following the posted speed limit and driving under the speed limit in heavy traffic.

Naughty: Not changing your driving behaviors in snow, slush, sleet or ice.

Nice: Slowing down and increasing your following distance in inclement weather or when visibility is bad. Put your truck in a lower gear as needed. Never use your Jake brake on icy roads. Nearly one-quarter of weather-related vehicle crashes happen on snowy, slushy or icy pavement, says the [Federal Highway Administration](#). Remember, bridges and overpasses freeze faster than roads.

Naughty: Failing to properly maintain your truck and keeping it safe to operate.

Nice: Performing thorough pre-, during and post-trip inspections. Checking your tire pressure with a gauge. Making sure your windshield, headlights and taillights are clear of snow and ice, and that your blinkers work properly. Adding chains if needed when driving in snow.

Naughty: Working 12+ hours to make up time.

Nice: Following hours-of-service rules. Don't exceed 11 hours of work over a 24-hour period.

You have a lot to celebrate over the holidays. Practice "nice" driving behaviors and enjoy the season!