

Common Courtesy and Common Sense Matter on the Road By Cindy Genau

The lack of courtesy and common sense which cause collisions can be applied to all those who share the road. This includes drivers of a vehicle, driver of a bicycle, and pedestrians.

My husband and I were driving through Newark on Cleveland Avenue last week after dropping off our car to be repaired. Unfortunately, we have been involved in several collisions in the last month. As a result, I have been driving with extra care. I also am more watchful about others that I am sharing the road with. So, when I was being very cautious and courteous as I passed a bicyclist in a tight spot, I was very annoyed by his lack of common sense as he broke the law by speeding though the red light we both reached at the same time. This bicyclist put himself and the other motorists on the road at risk for a collision.

I am not picking on bicyclists. We also were driving on Route 896 when several motorcyclists passed us speeding and weaving in and out of traffic. They were driving with the same lack of courtesy for other motorists as the bicyclist. The motorcyclists also exercised the same lack of common sense as they broke the law by making unsafe lane changes. They put themselves and the other motorists on the road at risk for a collision.

Pedestrians are also users of the road. Sometimes pedestrians cross at areas that are unsafe, which is discourteous to the motorists and shows a lack of common sense that puts all parties at risk of a collision. Crosswalks are designed to give motorists time to see pedestrians at crosswalks so they can stop appropriately. Crosswalks give pedestrians a visible, protected, and controlled place to cross busy highways with the help of a traffic control signal, and a pedestrian control signal. For pedestrians to ignore the use of these protective areas is just not smart.

In the past two days, the local newspaper reported on six collisions in the New Castle County area. These collisions were caused by the most common reasons that all collisions occur which are: inattentive driving, speeding, other aggressive driving behaviors, such as unsafe lane changes, not stopping at traffic control signals and signs, and driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs, and prescription medication. All six of these collisions have one thing in common. All of them involve the disregard for the laws of the road. These laws are listed in the driver's manual every licensed driver receives. Breaking these laws shows a lack of courtesy for other users of the road and a lack of common sense. Why a lack of courtesy? It is a lack of courtesy because these motorists are not considering the needs and rights of other people but are self-consumed only with their own needs.

Why a lack of common sense? It is a lack of common sense because roadways, speed limits, crosswalks, stop signs, and stop lights and the rules governing those roadways and motorists are designed to help guide and keep users on the road safe. Disregard for the design of the road and the rules of the road shows a disregard for the safety of yourself and others.

Statistics prove your chances of being involved in a collision are greater when you choose to disregard the rules of the road by being inattentive, speeding, improperly changing lanes, disregarding traffic control signals and crossing signals. Most importantly, collisions cause injury and death. So lack of common courtesy and common sense is a disregard for the safety of your life and those who you share the road with. Collisions are avoidable and so are the injuries and death associated with them. Please take time to take stock of your driving today. Are you courteous? Are you using common sense? If you are, thank you. You are preventing the collisions that cause injuries and death. If not, think about how you can be a safer user of the road. Travel safe by following the rules of the road, be attentive, follow the speed limit, designate a driver, and let courtesy and common sense be your guide. Your best defense against those who aren't --- buckle your seatbelt.