

Seven Ways to Avoid a Traffic Accident

Over 90 percent of automobile accidents are avoidable. The following are seven such instances where you can completely circumvent collisions with a little common sense and precaution.

1. **Intersection Errors**

According to the Federal Highway Administration, intersection and intersection-related crashes make up approximately 23 percent of all fatal crashes, and more than half of all fatal and injury crashes occur at intersections. Look around carefully and always proceed with caution into an intersection, even if you have the right of way.

2. **Inattention**

Pay close attention on your own driving, other drivers, pedestrians, and driving conditions.

3. **Following too Close**

Most rear-end accidents are caused by tailgating, according to the California Department of Motor Vehicles. Maintain a 3-second following distance from the car in front of you, except in hazardous weather conditions where you should maintain a 4- or 5-car following distance.

4. **Vehicle Malfunction**

Have regular checkups, particularly of wiper fluid, brakes, and tires, and replace wiper blades whenever they are worn.

5. **Dangerous Roads**

Ice (which tends to develop more frequently on bridges, overpasses, shady spots, and intersections), snow, fog, and rain conditions require slower speeds and much greater caution.

6. **Unsafe Speeds**

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "the economic cost of speeding-related crashes is estimated to be \$40.4 billion each year." Excessive speed reduces reaction time and greatly increases impact and injuries.

7. **Improper Lane Changes**

Before you change, check all mirrors, and signal long before you change. Also, watch for the other vehicles.