

Did You Know?

In 2019, there were more than 38,000 deaths in auto accidents. Each year over 2.5 million of people are involved in automobile accidents each year for a variety of reasons:

- Cell phone usage - 1.6 million
- Distracted drivers – 421,000
- Texting – 330,000 (1 in 4 accidents)

Although collisions between motor vehicles continue to be the most prevalent type of incident (42%), collisions between autos and fixed objects are the next most common type (27% deaths). Specific data on vehicle fatalities are as follows (Data: National Safety Council, 2018 data)

- October has the highest fatality rate
- Fatalities with other motor vehicles (16,600) – increased since 2010
- Fatalities involving non-collision incidents (3,300) – decreased since 2010
- Fatalities involving pedestrians (7,700) – increased since 2010

Preventing Accidents:

Defensive driving is the mechanism needed to mitigate these fatality statistics. The rules of thumb for defensive driving include:

- Visually scan the area both ahead and around you
- Check mirrors every 3-5 seconds
- Always stay alert – do not drive if you are impaired in any way (i.e. sleepy, medicated, etc.)
- Think of “What if” strategies for different scenarios to help keep alert
- Many collisions are preventable, have you done everything possible to avoid the accident? In some instances defensive driving could have prevented the accident.

Be aware of your personal driving behaviors:

- Do you drive the posted speed limit regardless of current driving conditions (i.e. rain, fog, etc.)?
- Do you plan ahead for varying weather conditions, posted construction or other conditions during your commute?
- Do you use turn signals so that others around you are aware of your actions?
- Do you and your passengers wear seat belts?
- Are you a distracted driver (i.e. talk on the phone, text while driving, eating, reaching for objects, etc.)?
- Tailgating

Know the rules and responsibilities of driving:

- Know the specific driving rules of your organization
- Do you have the appropriate driver's license for the vehicle you are operating?
- Has the vehicle been appropriately maintained?
- Is appropriate valid insurance available?
- Operate the vehicle in a safe manner (i.e. do not speed or drive aggressively)
- If involved in an accident, stop at the scene and follow the reporting rules of your organization

Practice the 3 Second Plus rule:

- General practice is to maintain a 3 second baseline distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you
- For all poor roadway conditions add 1 more second of following distance
- For rain or snow conditions add an additional 2 seconds between you and the vehicle ahead of you

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