

THE DANGERS OF INTERSECTIONS



According to the National Safety Council, 40% of all auto accidents occur at or in intersections. Operating your vehicle safely and responsibly when approaching an intersection is essential.

Many drivers often claim they "had the right-of-way" after an accident, however; it is always safest to yield to another driver.

Handling the Dangers

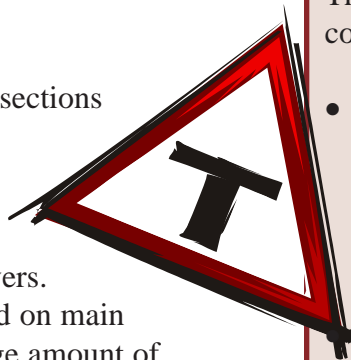
Always remember to maintain your field of safety! Maintaining your field of safety can be defined as stopping far enough behind another vehicle so that its rear tires are clearly visible to you as they meet the road. Allowing this much space between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you gives your vehicle enough room to move in case you are hit from behind, thus preventing further damage. When the flow of traffic starts to move again, wait two seconds after the vehicle in front of you moves before accelerating.

Intersections

We are able to categorize intersections into two basic types:

- **Controlled intersections** - those with traffic lights and/or signs that direct drivers. These may usually be found on main roadways with a fair or large amount of traffic.
- **Uncontrolled intersections** - those without traffic lights or signs. Drivers will most likely encounter these types of intersections on side roads where there isn't much traffic.

As you approach an intersection, controlled or uncontrolled, it is always safest to slow down! Slowing down will allow you to stop the vehicle in time, should a hazard suddenly appear.



Regardless of the type of intersection you encounter, always beware of the universal dangers:

- Merging traffic
- Changes in right-of-way
- Aggressive drivers
- Distracted drivers
- Poor sight-lines
- Pedestrians

These hazards all contribute to the three common types of intersection accidents:

- **T-bone Collisions** occur when two vehicles collide at right angles to make a "T" shape. This accident occurs when one driver doesn't yield the right of way, or when a driver tries to beat the light.
- **Head-on Collisions** usually occur when a distracted driver crosses the intersection and collides "head-on" with another vehicle.
- **Hitting a Pedestrian** - Pedestrians are the most vulnerable at an intersection and have the right of way over anyone or anything else. When drivers fail to recognize this rule, it creates a highly dangerous and potentially deadly situation.

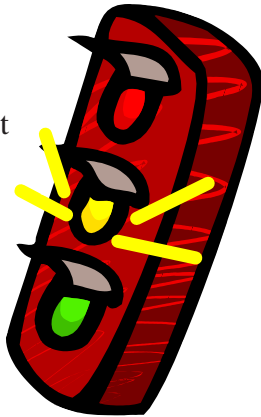


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Special Considerations

Traffic lights

- As you approach an intersection, be prepared for lights to change. If a light has been green for a while, slow down, as it may change quickly.
- When a light turns yellow, stop. Never try to "make it through" the intersection.
- When the light turns green, wait until the intersection clears and make sure that no one is trying to run the light.



Flashing yellow light, yield sign

- These devices mean that you may proceed with caution, but be prepared to stop. As you go through the intersection, be sure to look both ways and keep your foot poised over the brake pedal.

Uncontrolled intersection

- When going through an uncontrolled intersection, coast through the intersection with a foot poised over the brake pedal. Be prepared to stop or yield.

Intersection Safety

- Approach and proceed with caution
- Observe other drivers' signals
- Prepare to stop quickly
- Watch traffic lights
- Do not try to "beat the yellow light"

Be aware of everything that is occurring in and around the intersection!

Always scan the intersection when approaching and before driving through it. Be observant of everything that is occurring take note of:

- Where other vehicles are.
- What color the traffic lights are.
- What the signal lights of other drivers are indicating.
- Any emergency vehicles, merging lanes, pedestrians and school buses that are either approaching or already in the intersection.

When scanning the area, it is important to remember that there are vehicles all around you - not just in front of you. Check your mirrors often to remain aware of the positions of other cars on either side as well as behind you.

Yield right-of-way

Never take the right-of-way for granted! If you have the right-of-way but someone else is trying to claim the right-of-way, allow that vehicle to do so to ensure the safety of you and your passengers.

The Rules of Right-Of-Way.

- Yield to a vehicle already in the intersection.
- If two vehicles reach an intersection at the same time, the one on the left should yield to the one on the right.
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.
- When making left turns, yield to oncoming cars and pedestrians.
- At a four way stop, the first vehicle to come to a complete stop has the right of way, followed in a counter-clockwise circle by the vehicle to the right.



Irwin Siegel Agency, Inc.