

AVOIDING SIDESWIPE ACCIDENTS

According to the **National Safety Council's** Injury Facts 2007 Edition, **Sideswipe accidents** account for a total of **840,000 accidents** annually. **93,000** of those result in **non-fatal injuries** and account for **1,000 deaths**.

Sideswipe accidents usually occur while passing other vehicles or when merging onto or off of a highway. It is important to use precise observation and judgment skills when entering a highway. Quick decisions must be made regarding how fast other vehicles are traveling and which gap is safe to move into. Speed must be adjusted in the acceleration lane to make merging with highway traffic easier. When switching lanes on a highway, the driver should turn their head and physically check for a clear lane; making sure not to completely rely on the rear-view mirror. There is a fairly large blind spot in mirrors, a car may be sitting right in that blind spot and without physically turning one's head, that car will not be seen when switching lanes.

Reduce Sideswiping Accidents

- Ensure that all mirrors are clean and properly adjusted before getting on the road.
- Avoid unnecessary lane changes.
- When lane changes are necessary, signal lane change intentions well ahead of time.
- Take time and look carefully before moving into a neighboring lane. Keep an eye out for cyclists, pedestrians, and other vehicles.

SPACE

Properly managing the space around a vehicle can help avoid an accident. While it is not always possible to control how close other vehicles are following, a driver can strive to keep a cushion of space around the vehicle. If a dangerous situation develops, having enough space around the vehicle allows a driver time to react.

Space to the Sides

Make sure you always have an "out" in case you have to change lanes. Keep the vehicle centered in the lane. Aim to keep a space cushion on one side of the vehicle.

Give Space to Others

In the interest of safety, be prepared to give space to other vehicles. Be alert and look for cues that signal the intentions of other drivers. It's every driver's responsibility to keep traffic moving smoothly. Allow space in traffic for other vehicles to merge or make lane changes smoothly.



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