

# MAKE SAFE TURNS A PRIORITY!

During the course of a day, we make many turns while driving. All too often, accidents happen because the turn is done improperly, frequently because the driver fails to take the time to complete the turn properly or is inattentive.

Making a safe turn can not only prevent an accident from happening, it can ensure your safety, the safety of your passengers, as well as the safety of other drivers, passengers, and pedestrians.

## Preparing to Make the Turn:

**The first thing to remember when making a safe turn is to use your basic defensive driving techniques:**

1. **Scan** - Look to see if the green traffic light is about to turn yellow. Look for oncoming traffic or traffic in the opposite direction that may not be slowing. Be alert to unusual conditions, such as emergency vehicles, merging or expanding lanes, etc. Look out for pedestrians that are in the crosswalk or that may come out from in between vehicles. And finally, remember to check your mirrors every three to five seconds so that you know what the traffic and/or pedestrians around you are doing!
2. **Know your blind spots** - Vehicles have a blind spot on the left, just behind the driver's seat. The blind spot on the right is a little further back. Keep in mind, the larger your vehicle, the bigger the blind spot. Vehicles stopped closely behind you may not be visible in your mirrors.
3. **Maintain your safety zone** - Make sure you stop far enough back from the vehicle ahead of you so that you can see the vehicle's rear tires touch the pavement.
4. **Yield the 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 him or her to do so and ensure the safety of you and your passengers.
5. **Control your speed!** - Slow down well in advance of your turn. To prepare yourself for unseen hazards, cover the brake. By keeping your foot over the brake pedal you can stop quickly should something suddenly appear.



With either a left or right turn, always ensure that it is legal to do so before proceeding!

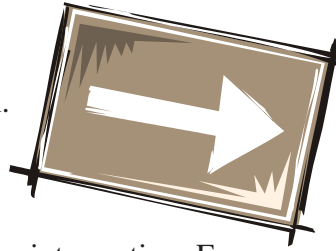
Remember, right turns are the trickiest. As you turn, you are turning into your blind side. This means that you need to use your mirrors and remember to check your blind spots. While waiting to make a left turn, keep your wheels pointed straight ahead to avoid being pushed into oncoming traffic should you be hit from behind.



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## 10 Tips for Making a Safe Turn:

1. Signal your intention to turn. You should signal at least 100 feet before the intersection. On highways, you should signal up to 500 feet in advance.



2. Move to the proper lane well in advance of the intersection. For left turns, you will want to be in the lane closest to the yellow lines. For right turns, you will want to be in the lane farthest to the right.
3. Stay to the right of your lane. For left turns, this will allow you plenty of room on the left to make the turn without crowding vehicles in the intersection. For right turns, this can prevent someone from trying to squeeze in next to you.
4. Slow down gradually - DO NOT slam on your brakes.

5. Make a complete stop and look in all directions. Never make a rolling stop! You should stop before the thick white stop line on the pavement, the Stop sign, or before a crosswalk. If you overshoot the stop line, sign or crosswalk, do not back up! There may already be pedestrians crossing behind you or the vehicle behind may not anticipate that you will back up. If you can not see traffic coming because of obstructions, make a complete stop at the stop line, sign or crosswalk, then move up slowly until you have a sufficient view.



6. Stay in your lane. Don't sweep across into other lanes or hit the curb.
7. Begin turning slowly. Keep your foot poised over the brake, should you need to stop. As you complete the turn, gradually begin to accelerate.
8. Scan the intersection for pedestrians and oncoming traffic. Be sure to check the crosswalks, the intersection to your right for oncoming traffic and the oncoming lanes for vehicles. Allow the intersection to clear before proceeding. If there are pedestrians in the crosswalk, do not proceed until all are safely across. If they are approaching the crosswalk, be sure to make eye contact with them and that they stop at the curb before proceeding.

9. Cancel your turn signal.
10. Be prepared for the unexpected!

