

Help your drivers avoid accidents at intersections.



Accidents at intersections account for approximately 40% of all vehicle crashes in the United States.¹

Collisions at intersections often present a greater threat than a simple fender bender with another car or truck, as they expose the weakest structural part of the vehicle: its sides. While side-impact designs have improved recently, the damage sustained in this type of collision can still be significant. Additionally, intersections are places where motor vehicles interact most often with pedestrians and cyclists, and those encounters can result in extensive physical damage and serious personal injury.

Why intersections require drivers to be especially careful.

As a responsible employer, you should educate those who drive on behalf of your business about the dangers they can face at intersections. Listed below are some leading factors that can contribute to a crash at an intersection, whether a simple, four-way crossing or multiple roadways coming together at odd angles.

- **Electronic and other distractions.** These include cell phone conversations, looking for directions when lost, chatting with passengers or even engaging with talk radio programs designed to emotionally agitate listeners over heated topics. Any of these can take a driver's attention away from the road and lead to a dangerous situation, such as following the vehicle ahead too closely.
- **Poor weather and limited visibility.** Bad weather can make it more difficult to see what's ahead and significantly reduce reaction times. In such situations, your drivers need to focus on lowering their speeds and becoming more vigilant.
- **A driver's physical condition.** Sick or drowsy individuals may have trouble judging the closure rate of oncoming vehicles or cross traffic when attempting to navigate through an intersection. Their condition may also make it harder to spot pedestrians and obstacles, and react quickly enough to avoid a collision. For drivers who are drunk or high on drugs, the ability to perform those same critical tasks gets dangerously compromised.
- **Vehicle speed.** This is a factor in almost every type of crash. Speed steals reaction time and increases the distance needed to safely execute maneuvers. It also makes handling the vehicle more difficult, and that can be compounded by poor roadway conditions, worn tires and older brake systems. Higher speeds also contribute more energy to collisions, which often translates to more injuries and greater physical damage. This is often the case when a driver runs a red light illegally.

Some practical steps to help your drivers stay safe.

While most of your employees are well aware of the basic safe-driving principles of avoiding distractions, maintaining proper following distance and adhering to posted speed limits, it's critical to provide your drivers with regular reminders of these and other safe practices. We suggest you do the following to ensure your employees are taking the necessary precautions any time they drive on behalf of your business.

- **Educate drivers** on negotiating intersections, traffic controls, dealing with pedestrians and right-of-way issues they're likely to encounter. One of your best sources of specific instruction is the driver's manual published by your state's department of motor vehicles. The manual—often available in both print and electronic formats—provides a great refresher on specific laws, signs, practices and tips to help avoid collisions.
- **Discuss roundabouts**, also known as circles or rotaries, which present different hazards from those of the standard four-way intersection. If your drivers aren't familiar with how to safely negotiate these alternative designs, be sure they receive instruction.
- **Mention automated traffic enforcement systems** that photograph vehicles running red lights. Most intersections controlled in this manner have conspicuous markings to alert approaching drivers that cameras are present. As a result, some drivers stop short on a yellow light to avoid a ticket, which may lead to a rear-end collision when the vehicle following fails to stop in time.
- **Advise your drivers to never assume** what another driver, cyclist or pedestrian will do. Despite traffic signs, signals and courtesies, others may be distracted or even deliberately disobey traffic laws. So, your drivers should always allow for time to react.



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New technology for better fleet safety management.

Consider technological aids to assist your drivers and enforce your company's fleet safety policies. There are dashboard devices that monitor the roadway in front of the vehicle for obstacles or pedestrians and send an audible alert to the driver that he or she is dangerously close to the person or object in front of them. This alert should only sound when the driver is at imminent risk of a collision and would otherwise be silent.

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