



Brace for Heavy Holiday Traffic

With more drivers spending more time on the road, the potential for accidents is greater. Many drivers are traveling longer distances, renting unfamiliar vehicles and carpooling with family, so it's important to take the proper safety precautions, particularly when traveling in and around the city.

Cities are where most vehicular accidents occur as crowded conditions, especially during the holiday season, create multiple hazards. Anticipate conflicts and handle them proactively.

Intersections

The majority of urban accidents occur at intersections. Vehicles are in conflict with each other when crossing or turning in traffic and drivers have to contend with pedestrian and cyclist activity when maneuvering through intersections. Here are some tips to consider.

- When approaching an intersection, scan left, right and left again as far as you can see to spot hazards early.
- Move your foot off the accelerator and cover the brake to save time in case of trouble.
- Stay in your lane as you proceed.
- Reduce speed and anticipate sudden movements.

Turning

Turning increases conflicts, so positioning your vehicle properly is critical. Here are some pointers.

- When turning right, stay four feet from the curb or row of parked cars. Signal early, cut the wheel as your shoulder reaches the corner and keep your eyes moving to the left, right and ahead. Use your mirrors for extra help. Avoid using a buttonhook turn in which you swing left to turn right. This creates the potential for a crash.
- When turning left, signal early, scan left, right and left again and have patience, especially when crossing in front of oncoming traffic. Yield the right of way to pedestrians and execute your turn. Laws regarding which lanes you can turn left into when

there is only one left turn lane (or no separate left turn lane) vary from state to state. If more than one turn lane exists, turn into the lane which corresponds to the lane from which you are turning, being careful not to drift into the other left turn lane.

Confused Drivers

Visitors unfamiliar with the area can cause problems. Watch for irregular movements and hesitations because many holiday travelers are confused about where they are going. Give yourself time and space to react to these hazards and maintain a safe following distance.

Pedestrians

The holidays bring crowds of pedestrians who seem to consider the streets and extension of the sidewalks. Practice patience and good judgment when pedestrians are present, including:

- Slow down, watch carefully and be prepared to stop.
- Search between cars at corners and be especially mindful of young children.
- Stay alert for drivers and passengers about to exit their parked cars. Give extra clearance so, if they open that door at the worst possible moment, you can avoid them.

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This document contains general information on reducing risk. Always consult proper authorities and your legal counsel as appropriate.

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