

Intersection Safety Tips

About one-third of all crashes happen at intersections. And a significant number of them are deadly. [The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) (NHTSA) counted 8,814 fatal crashes at or near intersections in 1999 -- about 23 percent of all fatal crashes in the nation.

When approaching an intersection:

- Try to enter the correct lane for your intended action well in advance of reaching an intersection. Be sure to signal before changing lanes.
- Watch for caution signs warning you of special circumstances at intersections such as turn restrictions, pedestrian crossings, or construction. Signs get knocked down, so beware of the drivers ahead of you.
- Watch for other vehicles changing lanes abruptly. Sideswipe collisions are common around intersections. Stay out of other drivers "blind spot" where they can't see you in the rear- and side-view mirrors.
- Maintain a safe distance between your car and the vehicle in front of you. Rear-end crashes are also very common near intersections.
- Be alert to brake lights or turn signals beyond the vehicle ahead of you. Anticipate when others will slow down.
- After checking to your left when turning right, always look ahead and right before accelerating. Vehicles ahead of you may stop for pedestrians crossing the street. This is a very common rear-end crash.
- Watch for pedestrians in all directions before making a turn at an intersection. Also, keep an eye out for cyclists going straight through the intersection, either on your right or on the sidewalk.
- Don't adjust your radio or stereo, dial your cell phone, or be distracted by other things when entering an intersection. Inattention is a common cause of crashes.
- If vehicles are stopped at an intersection with no signs, use extra caution when approaching them. They are usually stopped for a good reason.
- Don't tailgate. You never know when the person ahead may turn or stop when approaching an intersection. Tailgating behind large trucks is especially hazardous. You can't see around them, nor can you see traffic signals ahead. You may enter the signal during the red phase.
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When crossing an intersection:

- Watch for cross-traffic. Running a red light, intentionally or not, is a leading cause of intersection crashes.
- Be alert to traffic from the opposite direction turning across your lane in an intersection. Even though you may have the right of way, some intersections allow left-turns without a green arrow.
- Don't race a yellow light. Don't assume you are safe crossing on a yellow light.
- Always stop behind the marked stop line or crosswalk. Keep your wheels straight and your foot on the brake while you wait.
- Don't enter an intersection if traffic is backed up on the other side. You may get stuck in the middle of the intersection if the traffic doesn't move.
- Don't change lanes while driving through the intersection. If you are not in the correct lane before entering the intersection, change lanes after you have cleared the intersection.
- Treat a non-functional traffic signal as an "all-way stop." When you get to your destination, be a good neighbor and call local officials about the disabled sign

[This accident prevention information is provided by Gallagher Transportation Services](#)

