

## How to Avoid Becoming Involved in a Car Accident

By Douglas D. Brannon, Esq., [Brannon & Associates](#)

Accidents are an unfortunate part of owning and driving a car. You do not need to be a helpless victim! There are a number of safe driving habits you can practice every day to keep yourself and your passengers safe on the road.

1. *Keep Your Eyes on the Road.* It is tempting to watch the scenery passing you while driving, but safety should be your first priority. By watching the road in front of you and what is happening behind you through the rear view mirror, you will always be prepared.
2. *Leave Yourself an Out.* Place your vehicle where your safety is not determined by other drivers. Do not let yourself be boxed in by other cars, instead leave yourself a place to swerve if it becomes necessary.
3. *Be Especially Cautious When Driving During Twilight.* The time directly before sunset offers the most opportunity for a crash. It is difficult to see what is happening around you and other drivers are probably tired from a long day at work. Make sure your lights are on and always use your turn signals.
4. *Your Reactions Are Slower When You Are Tired.* Your vision and reaction time are distorted when you are tired, making it easier for you to cause or be part of a crash. If you feel tired, try getting out of the car and walking around for a few minutes. The best option when you are tired is to pull over and find a place to rest. Coffee, soda and other caffeinated options are no replacement for rest.
5. *Respect the Weather.* Use caution in snowy and icy conditions as the roads will be slick and other drivers may not be prepared for it. The first rain after a dry period is likely to create slippery conditions on the road. In the same vein, do not drive through standing water. It only takes a small amount of water to quickly disable a vehicle.
6. *Be Cautious at Intersections and Other Dangerous Zones.* At intersections, there are a number of distractions that could cause an accident – cars are turning, pedestrians are crossing the street and could be paying more attention to their cell phone than where they are going. Be more aware of your surroundings at intersections and other dangerous areas.
7. *Steer Clear of Erratic Drivers.* When you see another driver cut off three people and ride your bumper for a mile, they are unlikely to be the safest person on the highway. It is not worth making the driver angry or engaging with them in any way; instead, allow them to cause a crash somewhere else.
8. *Be Alert Near Parked Cars.* Just like the pedestrian who is not paying attention in the crosswalk, someone could open a car door into traffic without looking first. The driver could also pull out in front of you without warning.
9. *Know Your Brakes.* Most cars have anti-lock brake systems which require firm and constant pressure to be applied. Know what type of brakes your car has and be sure you understand the best way to work them.
10. *Remember the Basics.* It seems simple, but small actions like buckling your seatbelt, limiting loose objects in your car, and locking the doors can mean the difference between minor and serious injuries during an accident.

Despite all your best efforts, you can still be involved in a crash. If you are in an accident, call the police and do not leave the scene until they arrive. Make sure the officers know your side of

the story and exchange insurance information with the other driver or drivers. When you return home, call a [car accident lawyer](#) before you do anything else. An attorney will know how to talk to the insurance companies and protect your best interests.

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