

June 2013



Don't Become A Statistic

Daily Safety Focus

June 2013

MVA Prevention Month

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Daily Safety Focus

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #1 ~ Pay Attention

June 1

"I never saw him!" is the most common excuse heard after a collision. Was the other vehicle invisible? Virtually all collisions involve inattention on the part of one or both drivers. Inattention can involve many things, some of which are daydreaming, distractions, sleepiness, fatigue, "highway hypnosis," talking, etc.

A moving vehicle develops thousands of foot-pounds of energy. YOU as a driver have the responsibility not to use that energy to injure or kill others, or damage their property. Paying attention makes it possible for you to see, recognize and avoid the hazards lurking on the road; these are the three basic elements of defensive driving. The primary attribute necessary for a safe driver is alertness, and paying attention is the most important driving task because it helps create the time you need to recognize hazards and avoid a collision.

One statistic often quoted is that most collisions happen within a short distance from home. Why is this true? Since we mostly drive in our own neighborhoods, the odds are we'll have most of our mishaps there. Close to home we get more comfortable and perhaps let our guard down (and the other guy does the same thing); you've heard that "familiarity breeds contempt?" Better yet, familiarity breeds inattention. We don't often consider that serious or fatal injuries can occur in low speed collisions.

I have a challenge for you. While it is important for you to be alert and aware, it isn't an easy task. The next time you drive, try concentrating solely on the driving task. Think of nothing else. Then see how far you get before your mind wanders. Many drivers won't even get out of the parking lot! Seasoned drivers don't HAVE to think about driving much. It's something we do automatically, and our minds are free to wander. And our minds WANT to wander. Have you ever driven somewhere and been so lost in thought that you couldn't remember anything about the trip itself? Is this a problem?

Is this a curable problem? Paying attention can become a habit, but you have to work at it. Make conscious, persistent choices NOT to eat while driving, or whatever you do that takes your attention off where your moving vehicle is pointed. Connect your mind to your eyes and work at consciously analyzing what you see while you drive. We call this "situational awareness." Driving is the most dangerous thing most of us ever do. It deserves your full attention. Mastery of this one habit can almost make you bullet-proof. Not quite, but almost.

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Accident Review #1

June 2



This accident occurred in Port Bolivar TX. F-150 Heritage edition. I had just gotten off the Port Bolivar Ferry when I was on my way home from school(night classes) I made it about 2 miles from the ferry when a coyote ran out in front of me, I swerved to miss it and ended up hitting a Stainless steel fuse box attached to a concrete pole belonging to DOT.

I had the cruise control set at 55mph and never thought to hit my brakes, I was tired. needless to say, I was taken to John Sealy Hospital in Galveston TX to get checked out, Nothing broken, just really sore. Like to thank PB VFD/EMS and the Nurses and Trauma Team at JSER.

WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT, THEY SAVE LIVES!
Ricky H.

Lessons Learned:

- ▶ Be selective when you use your cruise control.
- ▶ Hit the animal, do not swerve.
- ▶ Always wear your seatbelts.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #2 - Don't Trust Anybody

June 3

We have met the enemy and he is us. You can never rely on what the other driver will do. Think back to all the mistakes you've made while driving over the years. Think ahead to the ones you know you will make in the future. All the other drivers are just like us! *Don't trust them!* While you are driving, keep a wary eye on the other guy and leave yourself plenty of room. Anticipate the mistakes he might make and be ready for them. Eventually, he will! Because he's just like us! When you are driving on "autopilot," you have turned control of your vehicle over to those other drivers - you are at their mercy. Their fate is your fate.

If you are too trusting, you are relying on that other driver for your safety. Is he worthy of that trust? Every few seconds, some drivers in this country find out this is a poor bet. Maybe some of those other drivers are returning from a beer festival! Maybe they just lost a job, or worse, a loved one. The other driver might be an 11-year-old who found Dad's keys. Approach driving with the idea that every other driver is an unpredictable menace and out to get you. Most collisions occur when the "other guy" does something we don't expect, or when we do something they don't expect.

If you accept that everyone makes driving errors, the next step is to drive with a wary attitude. Be careful of approaching red lights, because you know a light by itself never stopped anyone. Watch out for folks getting ready to pull out from parking beside the road. Look for gaps in lines of traffic which might be the result of someone pausing to let another vehicle cross in front of them. (I've personally witnessed three or four collisions in the past ten years that happened just this way). There are others: failure to signal a lane change or turn, or tailgating someone when they are poking along because they need to make a turn—a turn they suddenly WILL make when they see it at the last second. You can think of dozens of others. Be alert to the possibilities and have a strategy in mind for dealing with them.

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #2

June 4



Head On Collisions: Car Crash Accident Pictures and Stories

A head on collision occurs when the front end of two vehicles hit each other, these accidents result in the highest number of fatal crashes because the combined forces are so high. If two vehicles collide head-on, with each traveling at 50 mph the combined speed would equal 100mph. The reason for this is a law of physics called the Momentum conservation: In a collision occurring between car 1 and car 2, the total momentum of the two vehicles before the collision is equal to the total momentum of the two vehicles after the collision. Head on crashes often occur when passing, but can also be caused by driver inattention.

5 people were injured in a [head-on collision](#). My name is Alisha, I'm 15. There were 3 people including myself, in the [van](#) pictured above. We were on our way home from the Outback. [On Rt.45 West, Martinsburg , West Virginia.](#)

When we came around a sharp turn, and going on the straight-a-way. A [jeep](#), with no headlights, and 2 drunk people, came left to center, and hit us head on. The [jeep](#) ramped up onto us, and flipped, while it was on the roof of our car, and went into a 5 foot ditch. The guy that was driving our van, was sent air care to [Fairfax, Virginia](#) 2 1/2 hours away.

He ended up with a [broken pelvic bone, broken femur, broken ankle, and 5 broken rib bones](#), which punctured his lung. The other passenger walked away with a [broken ankle](#), and scrapes on his head. I myself had to be transferred by [ambulance](#) to another hospital, in [Virginia](#). I had a burn mark on my leg, stretching 5 inches in length, and 3 in width. I also had [bleeding in my brain, and swelling](#). In the [jeep](#), the [driver got ejected onto the road](#), he broke all the bones in his face, and got most of his teeth knocked out. I'm not sure which one but one of them also had a [broken femur bone](#). They [were not wearing seatbelts](#). Luckily everyone lived, but the paramedics, said we shouldn't have.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule # 3 - Yield Anyway

June 5

"Nobody ever yielded their way into a collision." Think about it. If you are in doubt about who has the right of way, give it away. The other guy may be wrong, but you can end up hurt or dead. We often say no one HAS the right-of-way until it is yielded to them. (Keep in mind I'm talking defensive driving practices, not traffic law.) Right of way rules are often misunderstood, and there are situations where the rules may not be clear to everyone. If there is uncertainty about which vehicle should have the right of way, give the other guy the road. When it comes to driving safely, it's not the principle, but the outcome, that counts.

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #3

June 6

Car Accident Causes

What causes most car accidents? At car-accidents.com you can read about the causes directly from the participants and see the results! The majority of car accidents sent to us seem to be caused by bad driving: driver inattention, failure to merge or yield, speeding, racing, aggressive driving and failure to exercise care in passing. Accidents sent to this site that can be attributed to specific causes aside from poor driving itself include: [falling asleep](#); weather usually ([Snow](#), [Ice](#) or [Rain](#)- a few related to fog); [alcohol, drugs and drunk driving](#); driver distractions including [cell phones](#), insects in the car, [playing music](#); collisions with [animals in the road](#), usually [deer](#), but also birds, horses, cows and dogs.



At almost exactly 3am on a very nice August night, [a drunk guy hit](#) my sister Madeline's car -[a huge white car](#)- that was parked in front of our sorority house (picture 1). in an attempt to flee the scene, the driver backed up and floored the gas, unfortunately, he slammed right into the car parked behind the white one. That car is, was, a [blue dent resistant Saturn](#). Behind that was a sister's boyfriend's car ([another blue dent resistant Saturn](#).) His friend in the car wanted to get out and the driver wouldn't let him so the friend opened the door of the moving car and jumped out. The force from the car that the drunk guy was driving forced Steph's (the second) car on top of Derrick's (the third) car.

After the police showed on the scene, Madeline decided to move her barely injured car to the back of the house, when she discovered that the White Stallion was, in fact, hurt; she no longer had brakes. Also slightly damaged was the car fourth in line, which was tapped by Derrick's car. Sound complicated? Just wait. The bumper of Steph's car hooked onto the hood of Derrick's car, wedged for good. When the tow truck got there at 3:30, the man got out, looked at the cars, and left.

When he finally came back a little after 5:30am, with another truck, and a team of firefighters, and a fire truck, and several police officers, we were told to back at least 50 feet away because of the good chance that the cars could explode upon their separation. Steph's car was lifted straight into the air with Derrick's hood attached, let down back onto his car and up again to release the hood. All told, there were four cars totaled, including the drunk driver's, and another car damaged. Just to add a little salt to the wound, the drunk driver (who is now in jail because he already had 3 DUIs) ended up being the same person who had kicked in Steph's side view mirror a few months beforehand. If you'll notice in the picture [both Saturns](#), for all the damage, and car pieces strewn about the street from both the undercarriage of Steph's and the engine of Derrick's, [both Saturns](#) are surprisingly dent free.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #4 - Don't Speed

June 7

When you are driving in traffic, what are some things you must do to avoid accidents? Avoiding accidents in traffic is a little different than avoiding accidents on the open road. Long-distance drivers know that fatigue is responsible for numerous accidents. But what causes accidents when you are driving around town, making frequent stops? safety topic discusses some of the causes of these accidents and what you can do to prevent them.

Many people spend a lot of time on the road as they are working. On any city street you are likely to see delivery vans, couriers, salespeople, and utility persons making frequent stops as they conduct their business. Some people spend many hours in traffic just going to and from work. Even though the mileage may be small, the amount of time spent on the road is very long. Every hour spent on the road increases your chance of having an accident.

Certainly **speed** is a factor in accidents. Many accidents happen simply because the driver is going too fast. City streets usually have speed limits of less than 25 miles per hour, and often you will see posted limits as low as 5 or 10 miles per hour. Speed limits are carefully selected to minimize the chances of accidents. When traffic is heavy, there just isn't very much distance between you and the next vehicle to stop. The slower you're going, the less distance it will take to stop. By going slowly, you will also be able to observe your surroundings more easily, taking note of cyclists, pedestrians, and other vehicles. Observing the speed limit is one sure way to reduce your chance of an accident. On rainy, foggy, or snowy days keep your speed even lower.

When you make stops, park your vehicle carefully. Avoid leaving it in a space that's likely to block traffic or create a blind spot. As you exit the vehicle look both ways before stepping into the road or onto the sidewalk. You'll want to avoid collisions with other vehicles as well as bicycles and passerby. If you must load things into or out of your vehicle, be sure your load does not obstruct your vision. It is better to make several trips with smaller loads than to overload yourself to the point you cannot see other vehicles. It will also help prevent tripping and falling over objects in your path.

Perhaps the main cause of accidents in traffic is a simple matter of **not paying attention**. In traffic, it is easy to become distracted, frustrated, and annoyed. Any of these can cause you to pay less attention than you should, often resulting in rear-end collisions when the vehicle in front of you stops. Running stop lights and stop signs is also a possibility if you are not paying attention.

Sometimes **paying attention to the wrong things** causes accidents, too. Reading addresses on buildings, street signs, and maps while driving can lead to accidents. You will be better off if you find a place to pull over safely while you read signs and addresses. Even better, try to pinpoint the exact location when you plan your trip--before you begin driving.

Fatigue is also a contributor to traffic accidents. After a long day's work, or perhaps a morning when you didn't rest well the night before, you are likely to feel tired. Feeling tired causes you to become distracted easily and also slows your reflexes. Don't take chances driving when you feel too tired to be safe. If fatigue is a frequent problem, see your doctor. For occasional fatigue, combat it with adequate rest, nutrition, and exercise.

To drive safely in traffic you must keep your speed down, pay attention, and avoid driving when you are tired. Many accidents and injuries could be prevented by following these precautions. Next time you're in traffic, remember these things and keep yourself safe!

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #4

June 8



Hi! This an incredible deer-car collision story If any of you thought you were having a bad day . . . As I understand it, the deer was on an overpass when a car spooked it. The deer jumped off the over pass were it met this dodge.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #5 - Don't Drive Impaired

June 9

First, let's define "impairment." Webster's *New World Dictionary* defines impairment as "making something worse, less, weaker, or damaged." Applied to driving, impairment means there is a factor present that decreases your ability to operate your vehicle safely.

The first thing that comes to most folks' minds is impairment through alcohol or other drugs. There are others as well: impairment through fatigue, or as a result of disabling injuries or illness. There was a case a few years ago where a man attempted to drive with some broken limbs. He used a stick to operate the gas pedal, and ended up losing control, overran a sidewalk, and killed a person who was using a pay phone.

Alcohol is a prime cause of impairment. Since it acts as a depressant, it begins to diminish a person's abilities with the first sip. Many people do not realize that even at very low blood alcohol levels, way before reaching any "legal limit," impairment of physical and mental abilities is occurring. In the USA, all states now have a .08% presumptive level -- the alcohol concentration at which a driver is presumed to be impaired, with no other evidence required. But impairment often begins at AC levels as low as .04%—less than half the "legal limit." What's worse, it acts on the very skills and abilities you need most as a driver: judgment, vision, and the ability to do several things at once. Since alcohol slows your mind and your motor skills, it has a dramatic effect on your reaction time and distance. If impairment causes your reaction time to double, for example, at 70 mph that can result in an additional 103 feet traveled. Obviously, this could mean the difference between a miss and a collision. Driving with other impairments could have similar results.

One of my common themes in teaching this topic is personal responsibility. We all have the obligation to make sure we are able to drive safely whenever we operate our vehicle. Ask yourself, "Am I safe to drive? Am I rested? Am I ill? Have I taken medications that might affect my abilities? Are my limbs available for use? Has it been long enough since I had that drink for the alcohol to have worked its way through my system?" (Generally, the body can eliminate one drink per hour, and, contrary to popular beliefs, nothing can speed up that process.) Do I have my glasses on, if needed?" Only if you can answer yes to all these questions should you exercise your privilege to drive.

I am convinced that if everyone would (1) not speed; (2) pay attention; (3) not drive impaired; and (4), wear seat belts (and use other safety systems such as air bags and ABS brakes), no one would ever get killed in a traffic collision. Just these four things, practiced habitually, would eliminate most serious collisions and save 50,000 lives each year. In the real world, though, we're human, and because we are, there will always be mistakes that lead to collisions. Since we do subject ourselves to hostile environments and physical forces that are incompatible with life, we should do everything possible to minimize the risks, yes? So, again, practice [paying 100% attention to your driving](#), [drive at a reasonable speed](#), never drive impaired, and buy and learn how to use safety systems correctly. These ideas are the foundation of any defensive driving "system." **Keep the shiny side up!**

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #5

June 10



This accident happened in Riverview FL. A careless driver on a [cell phone](#) blazed through a red light at 55 mph and struck my mom's drivers door as she was going 20 mph attempting to make a left turn towards home. Her car was pushed 40 feet and my mom's neck was broken in 2 places. [She died instantly](#). As her daughter, and someone that had to go to the scene to identify her, I can't tell you enough-

DRIVE SAFELY! OTHER PEOPLES LIVES DEPEND ON IT! My Mom always wore her [seatbelt](#) and was a very cautious driver. My sister and I, her fiancé' (she was due to marry him the next week) , brother and grandson will miss her forever. The other driver has not been charged with anything due to no witnesses willing to get involved and make a statement at the scene.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #6 - Wear Your Seat Belt

June 11

Without a doubt, seat belts are the most significant safety device ever invented.

Seat belts do several things for you. They provide impact protection, they absorb crash forces, and they keep you from being thrown out of the vehicle. Modern vehicles are built with "crumple zones," and seat belts are an integral part of the system. The belts hold you in place while the vehicle collapses around your "safe" zone. Belts help keep you in your place, in control, and better able to avoid a crash. Yet for all these benefits, folks have lots of "reasons" why they don't wear them.

1. **"They wrinkle my clothes."** Absolutely, they do.
2. **"They're uncomfortable."** Maybe so, but you can adjust them so they fit better. If you need to have your belts adjusted to fit, see your dealer.
3. **"I want to be thrown clear of the vehicle in a crash."** Oh yes, *PLEASE*, on my *head!* By the way, that's the number one cause of death in vehicle crashes.
4. **"I don't want to be trapped if there's a collision, or my vehicle ends up in the water, or on fire."** Wearing belts increases the likelihood you will be conscious after impact, less injured, and more able to get out. Seat belt failure or jamming isn't common.
5. **"The government can't tell *ME* what to do! It's a free country!"** Yes, it is. But what about other people's rights? When you don't wear belts and get injured, what happens when your insurance runs out? The public pays your medical bills, that's what. In my state, this costs taxpayers around *\$35 million a year*.
6. **"I've heard of people who were in crashes who would have been killed if they'd been wearing belts."** Who says so? Not any safety expert with whom I've ever spoken. If a collision can kill you with a belt on, then you're out of luck without the belt also, unless by a fluke. What I want is good odds. The statistics show that seat belts would prevent roughly 50% of deaths and injuries.

What about others who ride with you—what if they won't wear belts? I would say *no ride for them*. In any collision, unbelted passengers become flying objects—you can be injured if you are struck from behind by an unbelted passenger, even with your belt on.

Here's one last argument. If you are involved in a crash without belts, you may be held partially responsible for your own injuries, even if the other guy is mostly at fault in the crash. The insurance company or a court may rule that X% of your injuries were caused by your failure to protect yourself, and reduce any award by that amount. If your injuries are severe, that can cost you millions.

Daily Safety Focus

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #6

June 12



I was driving in Colorado around Mt. Evans area.

It was in the middle of the day and beautiful out. I was on my way driving down the mountain. I didn't know the roads very well and there were no guard rails as you get up further into the mountains. **I was trying to find my favorite cd to put in and I was reaching for it keeping my eyes on the road.** I felt it but couldn't reach it. I looked down for a few seconds and when I looked up my car was halfway off the mountain. It was a long way down as it was a mountain of huge boulders and no trees to help stop me. My car rolled several times, front to back and I remember every second. I just felt like that was it.....thinking at 22 this is it and I will never see my son grow up.

My car finally stopped and I discovered I was still alive. I could hear a woman screaming something at me from the top of the mountain. I crawled out of what was left of my window and laid on the rocks until help came. It took a long time for the firemen to get to me. There were six of them and they had no question I would be paralyzed. I made it to the hospital hours later and come to find out I didn't break a thing. I had abrasions on my leg, hand and chest. I was burned from the air bag on my chest and face. They were amazed that I was still alive as well as able to walk. Every part of me was sore & bruised for quite some time but I'll take that over becoming paralyzed. The tow truck driver ended up speaking with my father and he said that he had never seen anyone come out of something like this. He told my father that I rolled down 250 feet. I'm one very lucky girl and here for a huge purpose. The lesson from this is ALWAYS keep your eyes on the road!!!!

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #7 - Buy and Use Safety Devices

June 13

In addition to seat belts, we also recommend size-appropriate child safety restraints, ABS brakes, and air bags.

Child Safety Seats: As a defensive driving practice, children under age five should be restrained in approved child safety seats, buckled properly into the vehicle, even when they seem "big" enough to use regular belts. Keep in mind your state may have different *legal* requirements, and if so, you should comply with them.

There are different types of seats to use depending on the age, weight and size of the child. Be aware and use the correct type for your child. Buckle the seat into the center, rear seat position where there is increased protection from side impacts. A child seat should not be in the front seat, especially if there is an air bag system installed; an air bag impact can injure or kill a child in an incorrectly installed safety seat.

ABS Brakes: ABS brakes prevent uncontrolled skids during hard braking, by sensing wheel lock-up and releasing brake pressure (many times per minute), and just long enough to prevent a skid. As a result, you can still steer the vehicle, since the wheels can't lock up. Experts say that steering is faster than braking, but with ABS you can do both. You might say, "I was taught to do this with regular brakes; I pump the brakes to avoid skids." The reality is, when faced with a panic situation, you will NOT likely be able to stop or steer around a hazard using "threshold braking" (or pumping the brake). Average drivers don't practice those skills, and they MUST be practiced repeatedly to be mastered. Note: ABS brakes don't usually stop you FASTER than you can with the correct use of standard brakes, but for most of us, the advantage is in the ability to avoid a skid and still steer. If you have ABS brakes, it is very important that you read the information about how to use them in your owner's manual—and even practice in an empty parking lot somewhere so you know how they work and feel.

Air Bags: There are some things you need to know about air bags. First of all, the opening of an air bag is not a gentle event; they open with a certain amount of violence. They are timed so as you are thrown forward, they expand to fill the intervening space to prevent your impact on harder surfaces. You can be injured by an air bag - but the injuries will usually be minor compared to those you'd incur otherwise. You do not want to be too close when one triggers, either. Sit as far back from the steering wheel as you can while still comfortably reaching all the necessary controls, and grip the wheel correctly (your vehicle's owners manual has more specific information about this). This is especially important for smaller people. These systems are being improved every year, but even the problems with earlier versions don't change the fact their positive contribution to occupant safety far outweighs their shortcomings. Many people are still walking around today because they had air bags when they needed them. One last thing, be sure to wear your seat belts too; the bags can't help you if you're not in the right place!

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #7

June 14

Driver Fatigue and falling asleep at the wheel is a major cause of car crashes. Fatigue can be very difficult to identify as the source of accidents because estimates are made based almost solely on police reports, and driver statements. Estimates are that 10-20% of fatal accidents and about 5 to 10% of all car accidents may be related to tired drivers.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration there may be as many as 100,000 crashes from driver fatigue each year, with an estimated 1,550 deaths, 71,000 people injured, causing \$12.5 billion economic losses. These figures may be the tip of the iceberg, since currently it is difficult to attribute crashes to sleepiness.



Single Vehicle accident involving Ambulance... Happened on US HWY 52 North Bound, in Forsyth County, North Carolina, Of course the make is a chevy type ambulance pass through cab. vehicle ended up in the median. Story is that the driver had been up for close to his shift (24 hrs) and fell asleep. Only minor injuries, all treated and released.

Matthew

Daily Safety Focus

Rule # 8 - Motor Cyclist – Protect Thyself

June 15

Talk about helmets always incites vehement disagreement between folks that believe in their value and those that don't. My opinion? I haven't heard any arguments from the no-helmet crowd that make any sense, and my personal experience tells me differently.

At about age 16, I was thrown off a motorcycle at 45 mph and, after an absolutely *graceful*, parabolic trajectory, I landed on my head. I had a good helmet on and I was able to limp away (gashed leg, and I had back pain for ten years).

My father was broadsided at an intersection in Bakersfield, CA back about 1973. He was thrown from his motorcycle, about fifty feet or so, and landed on *his* head. His helmet (a Bell Shorty) saved his life, but he got a concussion that laid him up for a few weeks.

An acquaintance of mine, "Eric", was *sitting* in his driveway, on his shiny new Harley, polishing the gas tank. He lost his balance, fell over, and hit his head on the cement driveway (no helmet, as he wasn't going anywhere). He died 3 or 4 days later. *You can suffer fatal head injuries in an impact as low as 4 mph.*

A helmet is not a cure-all—no safety device is. I know that in any collision with a four-wheeler, I on my motorcycle am going to be the loser. What would be a "fender bender" for an auto is often death for a biker. We can easily lose a leg, have our organs destroyed, and/or suffer paralysis. We slide across asphalt grinding rocks, glass and who-knows-what-else into our flesh, all of which must then be scraped out by a big strong medical professional who uses sharp pointy objects and no anesthesia to dull the pain.

Since I love to ride, and *cannot* quit, I have a *responsibility* to protect myself as much as possible—I wear a good helmet (with both Federal Department of Transportation and Snell Foundation certification), eye protection, protective clothing, and good boots. Knowing what I know, *not* doing this just doesn't make sense.

Keep it between the fence-posts!

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #8

June 16



This happened on I-80 going westbound in [Central Pennsylvania](#). I was traveling westbound in the fast lane following the [semi truck](#) seen in these pictures. We were about to pass a newer [Buick](#) (seen in pictures) when this happened.

There was a 76 year old driver and 85 year old passenger. I saw them turn on their left turn signal but they were in the slow lane (right lane). They then suddenly turned at 60 Mph right in front of the semi truck.

The semi [T boned them](#) at 65 Mph. I had to slam my brakes on and slid into the grassy median and called 911. I took these digital pics while waiting to speak to the state trooper who was still with the truck driver. Both [women were killed](#) and it was an incredibly ugly scened that I walked up to.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #9 - Don't Run Red Lights

June 17

In my home town, drivers reportedly run red lights 120,000+ times each day!

First, there are two basic types of red light runners—there's the daydreamer or distracted driver who just doesn't see it, and then there's the driver who's impatient and accelerates on the yellow signal instead of stopping and waiting the average 45 seconds of a signal cycle! Some of us are guilty of both offenses. Are we really in that much of a hurry? Running red lights kills hundreds of us every year.

What constitutes running a red light? It means your vehicle entered the intersection after the signal turned red. In order to know whether you've entered an intersection, you must know where the intersection begins. The boundary is farther out than you might think, and that causes part of the problem. Here's the definition in my state: the intersection boundary (in Arizona) is the extension of the lateral curb lines (of two or more cross streets). The lateral curb line is an unpainted line drawn from corner to corner—just imagine a line drawn from the "point" of each corner (where the outer edge of the sidewalk meets the outer edge of the cross street sidewalk) across the street to the next one. The painted stop line and crosswalk are typically several feet nearer to you than the boundary, and many drivers erroneously believe the last crosswalk line marks the edge of the intersection. This error can result in an extra bit of time for the light to turn red before you actually enter the intersection, resulting in a violation. **PLEASE NOTE:** The definition of intersection varies from state to state and the differences can be significant—you need to know what the law and definition is in YOUR state.

In my state, if you entered the intersection legally (on a green or yellow signal), you have the right to clear the intersection even after it turns red. You will find that most states have similar provisions so that left turning traffic doesn't get bogged. In all of this, though, the legalities are not the most important issue.

In the defensive driving world, we say, "the green light anticipator met the red light procrastinator." The collision of these two is usually a "T-bone" - where the two vehicles meet at a 90 degree angle. It's not a "nice" collision. The typical speed through an intersection is over 50 mph! You'd find this is one of the most commonly fatal collisions - one in which seat belts and normal rear-firing air bags won't help you much.

Be careful around intersections. If you get a yellow light, stop. You can anticipate when the light is about to change, so it is no excuse to say it was too late. If you have the green light, watch for the red-light runner—look left, right, then left AGAIN to make sure the intersection is going to be safe before you enter it, even on one-way streets (because somebody might be going the wrong way AND running red lights). Red light runners are often speeding as well, so make sure you look down the road far enough to see them coming.

Running red lights is too dangerous, both for you and for others, no matter how pressured or late you are. [Slow down](#), grow some patience! [Pay attention](#) to your driving so you aren't one of the oblivious red-light runners. **And live to drive another day!**

Daily Safety Focus

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #9

June 18



An employee was working in our Warehouse picking and loading material. Employee was asked to take a reel of wire to one of the local districts. Material was requested by the local shop to be delivered for work needing done within the next day. A co-worker loaded the pickup with the material. Employee and co-worker conducted job briefing. Employee proceeded to deliver the material. Employee was wearing seatbelt. In route, employee set pick-up on cruise control at 40 m.p.h. to maintain slower speed while carrying wire. Employee fell asleep approximately 2 miles outside of the local shop. Employee woke up after crossing roadway and traveling through grass into trees. Employee braked but was not able to avoid trees.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #10 - Drive Precisely

June 19

Sloppy driving breeds mishaps! Most everyone knows the basics of the traffic laws; signaling, proper lane position for turns, turning into the proper lanes, complying with traffic signs (like "No U-Turns," "No right turn on red," etc.), driving to the right except when passing, passing across double yellow stripes, really STOPPING for stop signs, and many others. Drivers ignore them for the sake of expediency every day. We are so impatient to get about the details of our lives that we don't take the time to do it "right." One estimate I've seen is that average drivers commit 2.5 traffic violations every mile they drive! But, those pesky, nit-picky driving rules ARE important!

Here's an illustration of the concept applied to a different realm: the airport "traffic pattern." Occasionally in the news, a reporter will say that an aircraft crash happened because the airport had no air traffic controller, implying that it is simply chaos without one. But the fact is, uncontrolled airports are common in the aviation world and this isn't normally dangerous. ALL pilots learn basic rules for operating around airports - we enter and depart the area at set altitudes and at specific angles. We communicate our intentions to each other on special dedicated radio frequencies. We make turns in standard directions, either left or right, depending on the dictates of the airport's neighborhood. We learn where the dangers lie and how to avoid them. We keep a vigilant eye out for other air traffic, and we KNOW where to look for them because they are following the same rules we are. This process works because everyone learns the same rules and we all have a stake in doing it right. The result when someone doesn't do it right is often a smoking hole stuffed with twisted, scorched metal.

Why is it important to follow all the little rules that don't seem to make much difference? Because it works the same way in the motoring world. Traffic rules are in place to create the consistency and uniformity that allow us to predict with some degree of confidence what the other guy is going to do, thereby avoiding conflicts and collisions. Ignoring the rules of the road helps create the chaos you see every day. So, drive precisely, follow the rules, and watch out for the other guy!

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #10

June 20



This wreck happened in Charlotte, NC. Car lost control, went off road into ditch, ramped out of ditch into a tree, then rolled a few times. The driver was not wearing his seatbelt and was thrown from the car at impact with the tree. I, the passenger, wearing my seatbelt, was pinned inside of the car. The Fire Dep't had to use the Jaws of Life to get me out. The driver was paralyzed from the chest down, I fractured 5 vertabrae, broke 2 ribs and suffered bruising on the brain.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #11 - Chill Out

June 21

Driving safely is all about attitude. In fact, all I can really teach you is attitude. Think about it—if you've been driving for a while, you know most all the rules—OK, so maybe you do need a refresher occasionally—and you know how to drive "defensively." You may not think you do—but you do. You learn by surviving to drive another day. What we often lose sight of are the dangers of driving—it is such a normal part of our lives that we don't consciously think about how dangerous it really is. Thinking about this occasionally is a good thing.

Driving conflicts have been with us since the beginning. "In Ohio in 1895, there were only TWO motorcars. Guess what happened?" An old photo actually showed the two horseless carriages on a collision course to a "T" intersection, both (male) drivers jabbering merrily to a carload of female passengers, and neither one looking anywhere close to the direction they were speeding! I'm not sure if that very old joke is based in truth or not, but if you have driven in this country you KNOW it could be! If you drive, you will be involved in conflicts. You can't totally control them, but you can control how you react to them. What makes the difference, and what you need to remain safe in today's traffic circus, is to keep a calm, positive, and detached attitude. This is something you can LEARN to do.

I can tell you from experience, most of the tickets or mishaps I've ever had happened when I was angry or upset (there've been a few). When your emotions are running high, your judgment can fail you, and you may not notice otherwise apparent, even obvious, dangers. If you find yourself driving while emotionally stressed or upset, it is important that you pull over, take a few deep breaths and calm down, before something happens that would be a cause for further regret.

Since we all make mistakes in our driving, it goes without saying that at any given moment, other drivers are doing exactly that—making mistakes, not intentionally malicious moves. When other drivers do something wrong, shouldn't our reaction be to let it slide, chalk it up to unintentional human error, the same as we hope they'd do for us?

Remember these words: "It doesn't matter." When other drivers make mistakes, or are rude (even intentionally), what do you gain by letting it affect your attitude or behavior? It doesn't matter. In ten minutes, you won't even remember that it happened. Since we are all human, we can't be perfect all the time. Don't let the error the other driver commits be the reason you lose control (one way or another) and have a collision, or worse. Many collisions occur when a driver is mad, upset, stressed, or distracted in some way. **Try to keep your attitude rational, calm and positive.**

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #11

June 22



I was at my friend Andy's house having a party. I am not much of a drinker and I am normally the D D as I was this night. My friend, Josh, was about to get off work so I got the keys to the Fire bird formula and headed out. His work was not more than a 20 min drive. It was dark and a bit hazy as well as very slick that night. I was heading north on 48th street in Des Moines, IA. This was a drive I had made many times in the past but this time turned out to be terribly different from all the others.

I was traveling at approx 45 to 50 mph, the speed limit on this street was 35. I noticed a person walking out of the corner of my eye, it appeared as though he was going to step out in to the street. I was spooked, so I swerved to miss him. Due to the fact that I was not used to the quick steering of this sporty car, I way over steered and the car began to spin on the icy road. I hit a large snow drift on the side of the road and it launched me in to the air. I then struck a telephone pole with the drivers side of the car, almost directly in the drivers door. The heavy car severed the pole and I continued my horrifying ride. The car flipped twice and came to rest on its side in the front yard of a house a block away.

It was mere minutes before the rescue personnel arrived, and they began working to extricate me from the car. Both of my legs were trapped by the door and the dash of the car. I had a steal rod from inside the door shoved through both of my legs right below the knee. I was trapped in the car for around 2 hours because the piece of metal I had in my legs would not cut with the tools the fire department were using. The trauma team responded and surgically removed me from the car. I spent over 3 weeks in the hospital and suffered from a broken left femur, left tibia, left fibula, right tibia. The right fibula was not broken but was violently removed from the knee causing permanent loss of control of my right foot. I am now up and walking and preparing to return to work after 7 months.

I want to give thanks to God, the Des Moines fire department, and my seat belt for saving my life. I would also like to thank my family and friends for being a constant support throughout this personal tragedy.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #12 - Look Down the Road

June 23

This means keep your eyes UP and looking down the road. Many drivers focus on the road only 5 or 8 seconds ahead. You should be looking about 15-20 seconds ahead of your vehicle, farther if you can. This gives you the time to recognize and avoid most potential hazards before they become a problem. You'll see lane restrictions or construction areas, traffic congestion, truck entrances, mishaps, etc. This technique is also useful for new drivers when learning how to steer. Keeping your eyes focused far down the road (instead of just past the end of the hood) creates stability in the roadway. In other words, it helps eliminate the unsteady weaving that is one characteristic of a novice driver.

There are other important ways to use your vision as a key tool for safe driving. Drivers should see, and be mindful of, everything around them on both sides and for several hundred feet ahead (about two blocks) and also to the rear. Do this and you'll be able to see and avoid the immediate hazards others don't notice: balls rolling into the street followed by children, cars about to pull out from parallel parking, pedestrians hidden between vehicles, runaway trucks bearing down on you from behind, etc.

Here's another tip. Don't concentrate on any one thing in your field of view for more than a second. Your focused field of vision is very narrow, less than 5 feet wide at 100 feet. Everything else you see is first picked up by your peripheral vision, which is effective at picking up motion but doesn't provide a clear view. If you don't believe this, hold your watch arm out to its full extension, and bend your wrist so you can look directly at your knuckles. Now, while staring at your knuckles, try to see what time it is without moving your eyes. While your watch is within your field of view, your view of it is unfocused. For the purposes of driving, you therefore need to keep your focused vision moving in a scanning "pattern" so that you clearly see everything that may affect your progress.

The importance of your peripheral vision is that while it is not clear or focused, it detects movement—it is your "early warning" vision. If you allow your eyes to remain fixed on any one thing, your peripheral vision immediately begins to narrow down into "tunnel" vision—and you lose your ability to detect movement to the sides. Keeping your eyes moving prevents this from occurring.

Your vision is perhaps the most important tool you have while driving. Use it effectively! Look as far down the road as possible, and use a scanning motion to take in and analyze everything that is happening around you or close enough to be a hazard.

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #12

June 24



I was going skiing with my brother at Cannon Mt just north of Lincoln, New Hampshire on I-93. It was about 8:30 in the morning and some snow was drifting on to the freeway from a large snowstorm that two days before on Christmas day. My brother and I were cruising along at about 60 mph not really concerned about the road because most of the highway was fine but then we hit a really slick patch of black ice. The truck fishtailed all over the freeway and we went off the left side going sideways at probaly 50 or 55 mph. Next thing I know we are both hanging by our seatbelts up-side-down. I think we flipped the truck 1 1/2 or 2 1/2 times but I really don't know cause snow was flying everywhere and I had my eyes closed.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule # 13 - Create Space

June 25

Guard your safety by actively creating space around your vehicle, never allowing yourself to get "boxed in." Adequate space creates time and helps you avoid collisions. Maintain at LEAST two seconds of following distance, more if you can. Adjust your position in traffic as necessary to avoid driving in others' blind areas. Don't allow yourself to be tailgated—change lanes or adjust your speed to encourage tailgaters to pass you.

Many of us were taught to use the car-length rule for following distance (one car length for every ten mph). That rule is no longer recommended because car lengths are difficult to visualize, impossible to visualize when moving, and the rule didn't provide enough space in the first place. For example, 6 car lengths at 60 mph provide roughly 108 feet of space. At 60 mph, the average alert reaction time eats 60 to 130 feet (and in the real world, closer to 135 feet for many), leaving little or no time to act. Two seconds of following distance at 60 mph, on the other hand, gives you over 176 feet of pavement to react and respond. Even at two seconds of following distance, you must respond quickly, but it can be done under normal circumstances.

How do you apply the two-second rule? Watch as the vehicle ahead passes some object—I often use shadows or marks on the road surface—then count "one-thousand-one, one thousand two." If you pass that same spot before getting to "two," you're too close—*back off!*

There ARE times when two seconds isn't enough. Leave more space when you can, and leave additional space if following a vehicle with different characteristics than yours—motorcycles or trucks, for example—or if the road surface is slippery. Motorcycles can often stop faster than you, and trucks (or trailers) impede your vision, which can cause you not to see hazards until too late. Ice can increase your stopping distance many times over, so leave lots of extra space if it might be present. Eight or ten seconds is not unreasonable around ice.

It is an error to think you cannot leave the appropriate space in heavy traffic. Some don't try, because they think other vehicles will change lanes in front of them and fill the space. It is not as common a problem as you probably think, and heavy traffic is one time when you really need the space! If someone cuts into your space, simply back off a little and get it back! Lose the ego—*"It doesn't matter"*—what counts is your safety. I once counted the number of times other drivers cut in front of me over about fifteen miles of city freeway during rush hour traffic. Over fifteen miles, it only occurred three or four times. I have found that typical, and I use the two-second rule every day with no problems.

Here's a tip—drive a mile or two per hour slower than traffic flow. This doesn't cost any appreciable time, and traffic will be slowly pulling away from you, helping you to maintain the space. If you do this, keep to the right and out of the way for courtesy's sake. In many states, this is a legal requirement when you're driving slower than other traffic.

Pay attention to anyone driving next to your vehicle in other lanes. Adjust your speed to keep your vehicle "in the open," with no vehicles to the left or right, as much as you can. Be very uncomfortable if vehicles are "packed" around you. Traffic tends to move in packs, so watch out and try to occupy the spaces between the packs, so you have clear lanes on both sides. (This is an absolute necessity for motorcyclists!)

It is important to leave space even when stopped for a light. Leave room in front so you can pull away if the car ahead stalls or doesn't move, or if you need to move because of danger approaching from behind. You also don't want to be boxed in and unable to move for personal safety reasons. Stop far enough back so you can see the rear tires of the vehicle in front of you where they touch the pavement—this will give you room to pull out and around when necessary.

Remember, leave yourself an "out!" May all your roads be new, smooth, rubberized asphalt!

Daily Safety Focus

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MVA Review #13

June 26

Teenage Driver Facts:

Deaths. Each Year over 5,000 teens ages 16 to 20 Die due to Fatal injuries caused Car accidents. About 400,000 drivers age 16 to 20 will be seriously injured.

Risks. The risk of being involved in a car accident the highest for drivers aged 16- to 19-year-olds than it is for any other age group. For each mile driven, teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are about four times more likely than other drivers to crash.

Stats. Teenagers are about 10 percent of the US Population but account for 12 percent all [Fatal Car Crashes](#).

Costs. Drivers (both male and female) under age 24 account for 30% - \$26 billion Dollars of the total costs of Car accidents in the US.

Male Versus Female. The car accident death rate for teen male drivers and passengers is more than one and a half times female teen driver (19.4 killed per 100,000 male drivers compared with 11.1 killed per 100,000 female drivers).

New Drivers. The risk of a Crash risk is much higher during the first year teenagers are able to drive.



In Warrensburg, Illinois, two [teenagers](#) were [killed](#) in a car accident. The older of the two boys, then sixteen, was driving a [Chevy Sedan](#) over [100mph](#) on a country road (Glasgow Rd.) before flying over a creek, hitting an embankment, and coming to rest on its roof in a field.

Both boys were [killed on impact](#).

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #14 - Always Signal Your Intentions

June 27

As a driving instructor, I often ask people what are their "pet peeves" about other drivers; a common reply is that other drivers don't signal turns and lane changes. How many times do you see drivers who do not signal? Or worse, drivers who signal a right turn but turn left? Other times, especially with vehicles whose signals do not self-cancel (trucks and motorcycles in particular), you'll see the oblivious driver cruising down the road with a signal still blinking when the turn was perhaps miles back down the road! It is important to [pay attention!](#)

Sometimes, drivers deliberately don't use turn signals . They think that if they signal a lane change before they start it, on a freeway for example, that other drivers will prevent their lane change by closing the "gap." That happens sometimes, but remember that courtesy is contagious too. Just as often, other drivers WILL make room for you if they know you want to make the change, and quite often (especially in freeway merge situations) they may want to change lanes to the right for an exit at the same time you are merging left into the lane. If both of you are signaling, it is very easy to coordinate the movement safely. NOT signaling in situations like that is exceptionally dangerous, and the resulting wreck often includes several vehicles -- not just the ones that didn't signal.

Most of us believe that traffic law says signals are always required, but that is not always true. In some states, the law requires a signal only if your change in movement will affect another nearby driver. If you are on a lonely highway at 3:00 AM, and there is no one else around for 50 miles, it may not be required for you to signal a turn! However, the reality is that most of us drive in places and times when our changes and turns do affect others, and from a defensive driving point of view, I recommend you always signal turns and lane changes -- and doing so creates a habit. This is one area where being on auto-pilot can be a good thing! If you always signal, then you are one step closer to [being predictable](#) which is a benefit to the other drivers on the road with you. And everyone gets to feel all warm and fuzzy!

Be careful not to send the wrong message when you signal. Make sure you send clear information. For example, if you are approaching an intersection, and you intend to turn right immediately after the intersection into a service station, be careful not to signal too soon. Other oncoming drivers may interpret your signal that you intend to turn AT the intersection rather than beyond it, and they may turn left in front of you. Finally, use your signal before you start the turn or a lane change! It's not of much use if you wait until you're halfway through the turn before you use the signal!

Daily Safety Focus

MVA Review #14

June 28

Car Fire: Crash and Burn Pictures and Stories

Car fires are very common and extremely dangerous. Cars can catch fire easily because of the volatile combination of fuel, ignition, airbags, exhaust and electrical systems. Anytime a car is on fire there is a danger it may explode.



State Police and Erie County Coroner Lyell Cook were called to the scene of a two car accident on Interstate 90 Saturday afternoon which claimed multiple lives. The accident forced troopers to shut down the westbound lanes of Interstate 90 in Springfield Township for hours.

The accident happened just before 4:00 p.m. near where the highway crosses Route 6N. Investigators say an eastbound van with 7 people inside lost control, plowed into the median, rolled several times and traveled into the path of a westbound car. Witnesses at the scene say the van was on its roof and completely covered by a tarp until the bodies inside could be removed.

Coroner Cook was accompanied to the scene by four deputy coroners. Cook has confirmed to WICU12News that six people were killed in the accident. Cook says the victims are all from India, they were in a caravan of cars traveling from Michigan to Niagara Falls. One person who survived in the eastbound vehicle and the driver of the westbound car were both taken by ambulance to Hamot Trauma Center for treatment.

Investigators believe the survivors were the only ones involved in the accident who were wearing seatbelts. They are identified as 28 year old Nitin Gupta from the van and 25 year old Melanie Cesnick from Avon Lake, Ohio, the driver of the westbound car. Coroner Cook says all the victims died of blunt force trauma, two were ejected from the van. Those killed range in age from 25 to 35. State Police accident reconstruction experts were called to the scene to try and determine how the accident happened.

Daily Safety Focus

Rule #15 - Avoid Backing Up

June 29

Many fender-benders occur when drivers back up. Several years ago, my state purchased a fleet of fifty full-size vans for the use of state agencies. Within a couple of years, all but ONE of those vans had backing damage of one kind or another—the only one that didn't was the one used by the driving instructors to TEACH employees how to drive the vans! I have heard that many other companies with fleet vehicles report the same problem, and it's not just vans.

Since the risks are higher for collisions while backing, take special care to make sure you don't back-up without visually clearing the area behind the vehicle first. Many times each year, children are run over in their own driveways because drivers didn't look behind their vehicles first. For this reason, many companies require their drivers to place an orange traffic cone behind their vehicles when they park, forcing them to look behind it again as they pick up the cone prior to driving away.

Once you've cleared the area behind you, turn and look to the rear while you back. In trucks, you may not be able to see directly to the rear, except in the side view mirrors. It's always a good idea to have a "spotter" behind you in these circumstances, a second person standing behind your vehicle where you can see them, giving you information about how you are doing. Keep your speed very low—down to a crawl.

There are a couple more ways to protect against parking lot mishaps. If you can, pick a parking spot you can pull straight into and on to the next row, so that when you depart, you are pulling forward out of your spot instead of backing up. In busier parking lots where this is not possible, try backing into your parking space to begin with instead of backing out when you leave. The advantage is you can visually clear the parking spot as you approach it, adding a bit of extra safety, and then exit it forward instead of backing into the driving lane as you leave.

Many folks think it is illegal to back up on a roadway. This is not always the case. In my state, for example, you can back up on a roadway as long as you do so safely—but that's the real issue, isn't it? It's not easy to be safe when trying to back up on a roadway you're sharing with many other vehicles and pedestrians. One situation where you shouldn't back up is when you overrun a "stop line" at an intersection while stopping for a red light (or stop sign). If this happens, and you find yourself straddling the crosswalk, it is usually better to stay where you are, rather than backing up to the proper place. Backing up through a crosswalk can be much more dangerous for obvious reasons.

Another exception is on controlled access highways, where it is illegal to stop or back up anywhere on the right-of-way, including shoulders, gore areas, off-ramps and access roads. As always, you should check the law in YOUR state so you know what the law is where you drive, but also consider that just because something is legal doesn't always mean it is safe.

Happy motoring and keep the shiny side up!

Daily Safety Focus

I Went to A Party Mom

I went to a party, Mom
and remembered what you said.
You told me not to drink, Mom
so I had sprite instead.

I felt proud of myself, Mom
the way you said I would,
that I didn't drink and drive, Mom
though some friends said i should.

I made a healthy choice, Mom
and your advice to me was right
as the party finally ended, Mom
and the kids were out of sight.

I got into my car, Mom
sure to get home in one piece,
I never knew what was coming, Mom
something I expected least.

Now I'm lying on the pavement, Mom
And I hear the policeman say,
"The kid that caused this wreck was
drunk,"
Mom His voice seems far away.

My own blood's all around me, Mom
as I try hard not to cry.
I can hear the paramedic say, Mom
"This kid is going to die."

I'm sure the guy had no idea, Mom
while he was flying high,
because he chose to drink and drive, Mom
now I have to die.

So why do people do it, Mom
Knowing it ruins lives?
And now the pain is cutting me, Mom
like a hundred stabbing knives.

Tell sister not to be afraid, Mom
tell daddy to be brave,
and when I go to heaven, Mom
put "Daddy's Girl" on my grave.

June 30

Someone should have taught him, Mom
that its wrong to drink and drive.
Maybe if his parents had, Mom
I'd still be alive.

My breath is getting shorter, Mom
I'm getting really scared.
These are my final moments, Mom
and I'm so unprepared.

I wish that you could hold me, Mom
as I lie here and die.
I wish that I could say I love you, Mom
So I love you and good-bye.