



Driving: Hazardous Situations

SafeTips from the Naval Safety Center

Quick and easy summaries to find out about something new you're doing or as a refresher for something you haven't done in a while. They're a great training tool to pass around at meetings, through e-mail, or post on bulletin boards.

Car crashes are the leading killer of Americans between the ages of 1 and 24. More than three-quarters of the time, errors by the driver contribute to the wreck. Here are a few techniques for coping with common hazards.

1. Drivers who run traffic lights.

- ⇒ Don't assume other drivers are going to obey the light when it changes color.
- ⇒ If you are the first in line at an intersection, hesitate before starting to enter the intersection after your light turns green.
- ⇒ Look left, right, then left again before you accelerate.

2. Blowouts.

- ⇒ Know what one feels like. In the front, the car will pull hard to one side. In the rear, the car will weave and vibrate.
- ⇒ Don't slam on the brakes.
- ⇒ Take your foot off the accelerator and stay in your lane.
- ⇒ Pull off the road at a safe location.

3. Skidding. According to the AAA Driver Improvement Course:

- ⇒ Take your foot off the brake if the rear wheels skid because of hard or panic braking.
- ⇒ Ease off the gas pedal if the rear wheels lose traction due to hard acceleration.

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- ⇒ If the skid is due to a loss of traction because of the road surface, shift to neutral.
- ⇒ Look and steer in the direction you want to go.
- ⇒ Just before the rear wheels stop skidding, counter steer until you are going in the desired direction. Don't jerk the steering wheel, though, or the rear wheels may start to skid in the opposite direction.
- ⇒ Once the vehicle is straight, return to a driving gear and accelerate gently so the at the engine speed matches road speed.
- ⇒ If the above methods fail, maneuver to the shoulder of the road and gradually coast to a stop.

4. Other motorists who exhibit road rage.

Remain courteous.

- ⇒ Don't honk your horn too much.
- ⇒ Don't block the passing lane on a highway.
- ⇒ Signal before you change lanes.
- ⇒ Don't tailgate.
- ⇒ Take your time; don't be in a hurry.

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