

Leading Reasons for Crashes

A dictionary definition for an accident is anything that happens by chance without an apparent cause. There are causes behind each and every vehicular crash. Parents and teens need to recognize the difference between a chance accident and a preventable crash. It is through the personal decisions and practiced actions of the driver that will eliminate driving errors that may lead to crashes.

The GMAC (General Motors Acceptance Corporation) Insurance has identified the five worst driving errors – the ones that could kill you or someone else.

Multi-tasking

When you turn on the car, turn off the gadgets. No matter how busy your day is, when you're on the road, focus only on driving. Catch up on other activities later.

Following too closely

Count: One thousand one. One thousand two. That's about two seconds, and that's the cushion that should be between you and the vehicle ahead. That distance could save not only your bumper, but also your life. Make sure to double or triple that time when the weather is bad or the pavement is slick.

Failure to yield on a left-hand turn

Check the flow before you go. Also, look at the street onto which you are turning to make sure there are no vehicles or pedestrians in your path.

Incorrect merging

That yield sign means just that: yield – not stop. Accidents often occur when you are stuck behind a driver entering a highway who interprets yield as a dead stop. Don't be the guilty party. Use the ramp as a means for merging into traffic, not causing it to back up.

Backing up without looking

You don't have eyes in the back of your head so look over your shoulder when you put the car in reverse. Remember, objects in the mirror are closer than they appear. Your side and rearview mirrors have a margin of error, so don't rely on them alone. Look over your shoulder before backing up.

Thanks to GMAC at <http://www.gmacfs.com>

A FEW MORE TIPS . . .

Rubbernecking, driver fatigue and looking at scenery are some of the leading causes of distraction-related traffic crashes, according to a study conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University. The study, conducted for the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, may be one of the most comprehensive of its kind in the nation. More than 2,700 crash scenes involving distracted drivers and nearly 4,500 drivers were studied.

Some trends in Virginia vehicular crashes are as follows:

- Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Virginians under the age of 30.
- Virginia averages 19 traffic fatalities a week, or three per day.
- Virginia has also experienced a rise in motorcycle fatalities.
- Each year in Virginia, about 38 percent of vehicle-crash deaths are alcohol-related.