Preventing Left-Turn Collisions

Left-turn accidents are frequently severe as they often result in near head-on or T-Bone-type collisions at high speeds.

No Distractions. Always use your turn signal!

Most Left-Turn Crashes
occur at the end of a green light when the light changes to yellow and drivers turn, assuming oncoming traffic will stop.¹ Know your arrows - some are confusing.

Green arrow: It is safest to turn at intersections with green arrows. Oncoming traffic has a red light.

Steady yellow arrow: Light is about to turn red. Only finish a turn you have already started if there is an adequate gap in traffic.

Flashing yellow arrow: Use extreme caution as oncoming traffic has a green light and full right-of-way.

Stay Focused and Drive Defensively: Even though you may have the right-of-way you must drive defensively and prepare for others running a light or stop sign. Before proceeding after your light changes ensure all cross traffic has stopped and pedestrians have made it through the intersection.

Drive Defensively - Protect Yourself from the Mistakes of Others.

Waiting to Turn:
Do not pull midway into an intersection, hoping you can make the light. This can result in having to back up or dart in front of oncoming or cross traffic, both dangerous maneuvers.

¹ WYDOT Quick Facts: Traffic Signals, WYDOT’s Public Affairs Office, March 2012
**Two Left Turn Lanes:** Larger vehicles and vehicles with trailers should use the outer lane because of the larger turn radius and the ability to more easily monitor vehicles to your left.

**Practice Situational Awareness:** Perceive what is happening around you and react appropriately:

- “That car may pull out in front of me. I should cover my brake.”
- “That jogger may try to cross against the light. I need to wait before proceeding.”
- “That truck is going too fast to stop. I better brake now.”

**Left Turns:**

- Turn at intersections with green arrows when possible
- Scan for hidden and quickly approaching vehicles
- It is difficult to determine the speed of oncoming vehicles. Ensure you have an adequate gap
- Use extreme caution when your view is obstructed. If you do not have a green arrow, wait for the obstructing vehicles to move
- In 2019, 41% of motorcycle fatalities involving another vehicle occurred when the other vehicle turned left into the motorcycle

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2 Traffic Safety Facts, 2019, Motorcycles DOT HS 813 112, National Highway Transportation Administration, September 2021

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