Yielding the Right of Way: Common Mistakes

Right of way is a traffic concept used to establish who has precedence over another when sharing a roadway. Most states have specific yielding the right of way rules codified into their traffic laws.

Failure to yield the right of way can result in traffic violations and a determination of fault in an accident. Do not impede another driver’s right of way!

**Drive defensively**

Having the right of way does not mean others will respect it! Watch for others who do not yield when they are required to.

**Do not impede others**

Traffic should not have to slow or brake due to your actions! Wait for a larger gap before pulling out or merging into traffic.

Below are common failure-to-yield right of way mistakes that often result in severe accidents. Take precautions to avoid them.

- **Pulling out from a driveway or side road without an adequate gap in traffic.**
  - Traffic should not have to slow or brake due to your actions! Wait for a larger gap.

- **Assuming others will yield**
  - When you have a green light, always scan for other traffic that might not stop when required.

- **Not yielding when merging**
  - If you have a yield sign, other drivers have the right of way.

- **Making a left turn in front of oncoming traffic**
  - Ensure an adequate gap
  - Anticipate hidden vehicles
  - Watch for motorcycles, which are often difficult to see
  - Practice Patience!

- **Not yielding to pedestrians**
  - Pedestrians have right of way in and around crosswalks. Away from crosswalks, drivers must yield to pedestrians they encounter. Pedestrians are rarely found to be at-fault no matter where the accident occurs.

Always use caution around pedestrians

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