

Advice to help prevent a single-vehicle accident.



When you text while traveling at 55 mph, it's like driving the length of a football field blindfolded.¹

A single-vehicle accident is any driving mishap where only one vehicle is involved. This can include veering off course and hitting a tree, a rollover crash, or damage caused by animals or debris on the road. Bad weather, poor visibility and mechanical failures can all be contributing factors, so operators must be alert when they take the wheel. While your drivers may appreciate this, it's good to remind them of the following tips.

Prepare for your trip before you turn the key.

Many things can slow you down en route to your destination, so it pays to spend some thoughtful preparation time to help ensure safe travels.

- **Check the weather report.** If you cross county or state lines, you may experience changes in weather patterns. Be prepared to handle rain, snow or other conditions that may affect your ability to drive.
- **Start safely.** Get familiar with the vehicle controls and adjust any settings, as needed. These include seat position, mirrors and steering wheel. Also, always keep your seat belt fastened while driving.
- **Allow more time to travel.** This will reduce your urge to speed up if you are slowed by unpredictable circumstances.
- **Turn your headlights on.** Not only does it enhance your vision, but it also helps others to see you.

Stay focused to help avoid distractions.

Distracted driving can rob your ability to react quickly. Stay focused on the road, including what you can see in front of you and in your mirrors.

- **Prepare for anticipated distractions** like money for a toll booth, mealtimes or the need to reach for sunglasses. Refrain from eating, drinking and smoking while driving whenever possible.
- **Monitor your surroundings.** As you drive, be mindful of lane changes, traffic signs and signals, curves, road work and pedestrians. Seeing a situation develop early will give you more time to react, if necessary.
- **Turn off your cell phone.** Making phone calls and texting take your attention away from driving. Approximately five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55 mph, that's like driving the length of a football field blindfolded.¹
- **Take a break.** If you're feeling drowsy or have a task that cannot wait, pull the vehicle over to a safe spot out of the way of traffic.



¹ *Driver Distraction in Commercial Vehicle Operations*, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (September 2009), p. xxiv.

Monitor conditions to reduce the risk of losing control.

A safe driver monitors road conditions constantly and is ready to make adjustments. Knowing how to handle your vehicle in a variety of situations helps reduce the risk that you'll be involved in an accident.

- **Note how road materials affect traction.** Asphalt can be more slippery than concrete or gravel due to its petroleum content, especially when covered with rain or snow.
- **Be especially careful on sharp curves and steep inclines.** These conditions make vehicle handling more difficult. Also, be wary of the dangers caused by soft shoulders and potholes.
- **Slow down.** Driving at speeds above the posted limits makes it easier to lose control of your vehicle, harder to recover and robs you of critical reaction time.
- **Beware of standing water and wet leaves.** Maintaining moderate speeds is especially important in these conditions, as it helps to avoid braking fast and skidding.

Avoid collisions with deer.

While any animal can be a hazard on the road, collisions with deer can be hard to avoid and damaging to your vehicle. The majority of these collisions occur during the fall and the spring, with the highest likelihood during dawn and dusk hours.

- **Watch for deer crossing signs.** These alert you to areas that are more likely to present a hazard.
- **Always scan the sides of the road to spot deer.** If you see deer that are standing still, assume they could decide to bolt across the road.
- **When one deer crosses your path, expect others to follow.** Deer are herd animals and rarely travel alone.
- **When driving at night, use your high beams** when there is no oncoming traffic. This will better illuminate the eyes of any deer on or near the roadway.
- **Do not swerve to avoid colliding with a deer.** Brake firmly when a deer is in your path, but stay in your lane. Turning abruptly may cause you to hit another vehicle or lose control.



When one deer crosses your path, you should always expect that others will follow.

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