

City Driving

City driving is filled with hassles and delays, but these minor inconveniences aren't going to be avoided through reckless or rude behavior. The best advice is to maintain a calm and patient attitude.

Surviving Intersections

About 50 percent of all city driving collisions occur at intersections, usually because a driver failed to yield the right-of-way. A recent Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study reports that red-light runners are responsible for an estimated 170,000 injuries every year, about 900 of which are fatal. Worse, the number of deaths related to red light running is rising! To keep intersections safe, remember these tips:

- The vehicle on the left always yields to the vehicle on the right.
- Rolling stops can be a dangerous habit. You can miss spotting a vehicle and cause a collision.
- As you approach a “stale green light” cover the brake with your foot and be prepared to stop. Indications of a stale light include: traffic flowing smoothly, considerable cross-traffic, blinking pedestrian signals, and people standing on the corner.
- When a red light turns green, check to see that traffic has stopped on the intersecting street. Look left, then right, then scan left before you proceed. You invite disaster if you don't check for oncoming vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Turning right on a red light is al-



lowed only when it is legal, your vehicle has come to a complete stop, traffic is clear, and pedestrians are clear of the crosswalk. Always take the few extra moments to look for a no-turn-on-red sign.

- When you encounter a yellow light, always stop if it is safe to do so. The purpose of a yellow light is to allow you time to clear an intersection you have already entered, not one you are approaching.

Roadside Distractions

- A lack of consideration can cause trouble. Demanding the right of way can lead to a confrontation that benefits no one.
- Keep your eyes moving for potential problems such as children playing, cyclists, pets, and cars backing from driveways. Look into your rear view mirror often.
- Establish a high visual horizon. You should be able to see one block ahead of you.
- Blind spots are everywhere. If you can't see beyond an object, slow down or change lanes to improve your vision.

- Don't tailgate. Maintain a three second following distance.

- When waiting to make a left turn, point your wheels straight ahead. If you are hit from behind with your wheels turned to the left, you would be forced into traffic.

- Whenever possible, avoid getting boxed in. Speed up or slow down as required.

- Don't fiddle with the radio or other nonessential equipment in heavy traffic.

- If a left turn is risky because of heavy traffic or poor vision, make a right turn and use an alternate route.

Backing Up

- Always check behind your car. Pedestrians and small children can be hidden from your view.

- Use your outside mirrors to help your vision.

- Do not back into busy streets, highways and pedestrian crosswalks.

- Keep your foot firmly on the brake before shifting into reverse. Back slowly. Glance over each shoulder out the windows. ■