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# Preventing Top Three Crash Types

A recent review of claims indicates the top three crash types in both frequency and severity are: rear-end collisions, intersection/right-of-way collisions, and lane change collisions. The reason for this is the likelihood for bodily injury that can occur during these crashes, both real and fabricated. All three of these crashes can be avoided through fundamental defensive driving techniques. The following is a quick review of the driving tips drivers should keep in mind to prevent these types of crashes.

- **Avoid Distractions** – Drivers who are distracted or not paying full attention will have longer perception and reaction times—increasing their likelihood of a collision. Drivers must keep their eyes focused on the forward roadway with regular, quick scanning of mirrors and blind spots. Common distractions are phone use, eating and drinking, and smoking; it's best to avoid all distractions while driving.
- **Following Distance** – The minimum following distance should be at least six seconds in ideal conditions. Following distance should be increased at speeds over 40 mph, in adverse weather, or if there is poor visibility. To count following distance, count the seconds between the time when the rear bumper of the vehicle in front of you passes a stationary object to when you pass the same object.
- **Don't Speed** – The posted speed limit is the maximum allowable speed on that area of roadway during ideal conditions. Slow down when weather is bad, roads are wet, and when there is reduced visibility. Speeding greatly reduces your ability to stop in time, as a truck's total braking distance is longer at higher speeds.
- **Scan Ahead** – Scan ahead to assess traffic conditions in front of you. The recommended distance to scan ahead 15-20 seconds. Conditions are constantly changing, so it is important for drivers to continuously scan ahead of them.
- **Scan Intersections** – When approaching an intersection, scan the intersection by looking left, right, then left again before you get there to ensure the intersection is clear. Don't assume the other vehicles are going to obey the traffic control device. When required to stop, make sure you come to a complete stop, so you can adequately assess cross-traffic before proceeding through the intersection. When the light turns green, ensure all cross-traffic has stopped, or is going to stop, prior to proceeding through the intersection. Always proceed with caution, even if you have the right of way. Ensure there is plenty of space and time when pulling onto a roadway from a stop, side road, or driveway.
- **Know What is Around You** – Ensure your mirrors are adjusted properly. Check your mirrors every five to eight seconds to maintain awareness of the vehicles and traffic around you. Avoid changing lanes unless necessary. If a vehicle was visible and now is not, you must assume the vehicle is in your blind spot. Signal your intentions to change lanes early to communicate your intentions to other drivers well in advance of your need to change lanes.