

Roadway intersections are planned points of conflict requiring complex speed and distance judgments. Congestion and high traffic volumes can create delays leading to frustration and increased risk for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. Knowing and applying traffic laws can help prevent many accidents.

Follow the Rules

About half of all crashes occur at intersections, but they are preventable if you follow these simple rules:

- Slow down and scan oncoming and cross traffic when approaching an intersection.
- Know the traffic and right-of-way laws in your state.
- Signal your intentions with your vehicle position on the road and turn signals.

Traffic Signals and Stop Signs

Traffic signals and signs are used to assign vehicular and pedestrian right-of-way and promote orderly traffic movement. Follow these basic safety rules at all times:

- Don't speed up on a yellow light. Its purpose is to allow time to slow down and stop before the light turns red.
- If the light ahead has been green for a while, approach the intersection cautiously and be ready to apply your brakes.
- When stopped at a red light, proceed cautiously when it turns green. Red-light running has become a national safety problem, so look for any cross traffic that may continue after the light changes.
- Always come to a full stop at a stop sign or flashing red light. Rolling through is a violation.

Right-of-Way Rules

Misunderstandings about who has the right-of-way at intersections causes many accidents. Keep these rules in mind at all times:

- Traffic going straight has the right-of-way over turning vehicles.



- Traffic at stop or yield signs must yield to cross traffic without signs.
- At four-way stops or uncontrolled intersections, yield to the vehicle that arrived first. If two or more vehicles arrive at the same time, yield to the vehicle on your right side.
- Pedestrians always have the right-of-way. Be especially watchful at night when pedestrian visibility is poor.
- Right-turn-on-red signals or signs can contribute to pedestrian crashes. Always watch for pedestrians in the crosswalk before turning.
- In roundabouts, circulating traffic has the right-of-way over any entering traffic.
- Always drive defensively and never insist on right-of-way if another driver fails to follow the rules.
- Don't give up your right-of-way just to be polite; it causes confusion and delays.

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Turning

Data consistently shows that crashes occur more often with turning vehicles than with straight-through traffic, and left-turning vehicles are more often involved in collisions than right-turning vehicles.

Remember these rules while turning:

- Always use your turn signal and turn it on before braking for your turn.
- Use hand signals if the vehicle signals are not functioning.
- Always use the corresponding lane when turning at a multilane intersection. (Use the nearest right lane for a right turn or the lane nearest the center lane for a left turn.)

For Additional Information

EMC Insurance Companies:

www.emcins.com/losscontrol

- Safety by Topic – Fleet and Driver Safety

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration:

www.fmcsa.dot.gov

- Intersection Safety