

Best Practice Guide

Sideswipes



Don't Be A Sideswiper

A sideswipe incident is one in which the side of one vehicle collides with the side of another.

Sideswipe incidents often occur when vehicles change lanes, pass other vehicles, merge onto a highway or swerve to avoid a hazard. A number of incident prevention techniques can help to reduce your chances of being involved in a sideswipe collision.

Use Your Mirrors

Keep mirrors clean and properly adjusted at all times. If you cannot see through your windows and mirrors properly you will not be able to observe correctly when changing lanes or overtaking - meaning you will put yourself at greater risk of being involved in a sideswipe incident.

Don't Be Blind To Your Blind Spots

You must check blind spots every time you change the position of your vehicle. This includes when you change lanes, merge or overtake another vehicle.



Look Well Ahead

Always look ahead by at least 12 -15 seconds so that you are aware of what is happening in the distance. This can help you to determine whether you are about to encounter any obstructions in the road and whether the vehicle in front is likely to slow down. This can help prevent you from having to make unexpected departures from your lane - and help prevent sideswipe collisions.

Keep Your Distance

Sideswipe incidents often occur when a driver is forced to quickly change lanes to avoid hitting the vehicle ahead. Make sure you always travel at a safe speed and always leave at least a two-second gap between your vehicle and the one in front.

Be A Clever Lane Changer

When changing lanes you should:

- Look and plan ahead.
- Check what is happening around and behind you.
- Signal your intentions.
- Wait for a suitable gap in traffic.
- Check again that there is nothing behind or beside your vehicle.
- Recheck the lane ahead of you just before turning your steering wheel.

Master Your Merging

Entrance lanes or slip roads to highways and motorways are designed to help you safely enter the main carriageway.

To use them safely:

- Scan the traffic for a safe gap on your approach.
- Signal your intention.
- Match your speed to the speed of traffic on the carriageway if possible.
- Find a safe gap and merge with the other traffic.
- Never force your way into the traffic - stop and wait if necessary.

Look Out For Trucks

Take extra care when passing trucks as large vehicles are involved in a disproportionate number of lane-change incidents. Smaller vehicles can easily be hidden in the blind spots of larger vehicle and the driver of a truck may pull out without noticing you, resulting in a sideswipe collision.

If you must pass a large truck:

- Pass as quickly as possible (without speeding).
- Only re-enter the lane when you can see the whole of the front of the vehicle in your mirror.

Live Life On The Edge

Keeping your vehicle close to the nearside (pavement /sidewalk) edge of the road on single carriageways can help you to avoid sideswiping collisions - especially on corners. Pay attention to the position of your vehicle and ensure you never cross over the central white line unless absolutely essential.



Don't Drive Tired

Tired drivers are more likely to fall asleep at the wheel or experience 'micro sleeps' where they nod off for just a few seconds at a time. While a driver has his or her eyes closed it is easy for them to drift out of their lane and sideswipe another vehicle.

Distractions Are Dangerous

Anything that requires you to look away from the road ahead while driving is a distraction and can result in you drifting out of your driving lane and sideswiping another vehicle.

Avoid distractions such as:

- Changing the CD or programming the radio.
- Using a mobile phone to speak or send text messages.
- Eating & drinking.

- S** Stick to a safe speed at all times.
- I** It is essential to check blind spots.
- D** Distractions must be avoided.
- E** Ensure you keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front.
- S** Signal your intention before changing lanes.
- W** Windows and mirrors must be kept clean.
- I** It is dangerous to drive tired.
- P** Position your vehicle towards the nearside of the road.
- E** Extreme care must be taken when changing lanes and overtaking.

WARNING

Thieves are often on the lookout for drivers leaving their vehicles unlocked at petrol stations while they go inside to pay. Always lock your vehicle and take your keys with you.