

# Safety Spotlight



## Making a Safe Lane Change

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), approximately 530,000 lane change collisions occur each year, which is about 10% of all roadway accidents. Merging collisions account for 42% of two-vehicle lane change crashes. Changing lanes on a highway, especially in moderate to heavy traffic, is one of the riskier maneuvers a driver can undertake.



When changing lanes, it is crucial to be fully aware of your surroundings and to communicate your intentions to other drivers. **Here are some tips for making a safe lane change:**

### Minimize Lane Changes

Switching lanes can be dangerous and is often unnecessary. Plan your route and stay in your lane as much as possible. Limiting lane changes reduces the risk of a collision. Only change lanes when necessary and safe to do so.

### Check Your Mirrors

Regularly check your mirrors for any signs of vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles, or other modes of transportation before changing lanes. Use the lean and look method to help check your blind spots.

### Blind Spots

All vehicles have blind spots. Properly adjusting your mirrors and using the lean and look method is helpful, but that may not be enough. Consider adding mirrors to help reduce blind spots. Hood mount and/or convex "fisheye" mirrors are specifically designed to reduce blind spots around your vehicle. And they have been used successfully for years to help reduce accidents. A small investment for safety, blind spot mirrors have the potential for a large ROI.



### Use Your Turn Signal

Activate your turn signal well in advance of your lane change. Ensure it blinks long enough to alert other drivers of your intentions. A good rule of thumb is 3 blinks. This alerts other drivers to your planned movement and gives them time to react if necessary.

### Maintain Safe Distance

Ensure there is adequate space to change lanes without causing other drivers to slow down, speed up or swerve.

### Maintain a Safe Speed

Without speeding, match the speed of the traffic in the lane you are moving into. Avoid sudden acceleration or deceleration.

### Exercise Patience

Avoid rushing lane changes. Do not weave between lanes to make up for lost time or to look cool. Weaving in and out of traffic is an indication of poor planning, judgment and driving skills. Do not rush to change lanes. A safe lane change allows everyone to make adjustments if necessary to avoid a collision.

### Plan Ahead

Avoid peak traffic hours, allow extra time for delays, and get into the proper lane well in advance of your exit.

### **Assume Invisibility**

Operate under the assumption that other drivers may not see you. What you cannot see is just as critical as what you can see.

### **Be Courteous**

Provide space for other drivers to change lanes and refrain from aggressive driving behaviors. It may be irritating when another driver cuts in front, but it is best to back off allowing for them to get out in front and away from you to give you a safe environment.

## **Camera Benefits:**

Many collisions occur as a result of improper lane changes from other drivers.

Without proof, it can be challenging to determine fault. Often, our insured clients have benefited from having camera footage that clearly shows when another driver cut in front or hit the side of their vehicle. If someone cuts in front of you and then slows down or brakes suddenly, you may not have time to stop. Having camera evidence can be crucial in such situations.

**By following these guidelines, you can enhance your safety and the safety of others on the road. Remember, cautious and courteous driving can prevent collisions and ensure a smoother journey for everyone.**

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