How Good Drivers Get Hurt

Good visibility and dry roads do not overcome poor driving habits or distractions. Many fatal motor vehicle accidents occur even when conditions are ideal, according to the National Safety Transportation Board. Basic defensive driving can help you avoid se¬rious accidents.

Many people do not stop completely at stop signs or at intersections with traffic lights. Drivers also pull in front of traffic and often misjudge the distance and speed of moving vehicles.

Defensive Driving Skills

First, buckle up and avoid distractions in your vehicle, including eating and drinking, using your phone, and taking your eyes off the road.

Remember the National Safety Council collision prevention formula:

1. Recognize the hazard
2. Understand the defense
3. Act in time

Move your eyes continuously and don't just fix on approaching traffic. Watch cross traffic. Are they going to stop? Are they picking up speed to make a yellow light? This may give you an extra second to react.

Wait a second after your light turns green to make sure that cross traffic has stopped. Look for people who are increasing their speed to make their light.

Look for distracted drivers. Are they weaving as they approach or showing inconsistent speed? The farther you can see, the more time you will have to react.

Use major highways with medians and controlled access. These roads are actually safer than secondary roads with more intersections.

Look for people passing in front or from behind. Do they have enough room? If not, be prepared to react.

Check vehicles sitting at stop signs or unregulated intersections. Are they starting to pull into your lane?

Stay alert when approaching a traffic signal or intersection. Be prepared to stop and "cover" the brake pedal with your foot when going through intersections. This decreases brake activation time if someone runs a red light or stop sign.

To avoid rear-end collisions, maintain proper following distance and add space for poor weather or limited visibility and look ahead to slowing traffic.