



Since the inception of ICRMP in 1985, our most frequent cause of Property/Casualty claims has been auto claims. No other claim category comes close. The bad news: auto crashes are frequent and severe for Idaho local government agencies. The good news is that auto crashes can be reduced by focusing on safe driving!

The 7 Must-Know Tips for Avoiding Crashes and Saving Lives on the Road

1. Before turning on the car engine, make sure everyone is belted in, including the driver.
2. Keep pace with the flow of traffic. Driving too fast or too slow increases the probability of a collision.
3. Stay alert on the road and don't let a distraction inside the car pull your attention away from the road.
4. Monitor other cars around you. If another car looks as if it is straddling a center line, weaving, making wider than normal turns or abrupt stops at traffic signals, it could be driven by an impaired driver. Distance yourself or even pull off the road, if possible.
5. If an oncoming car is crossing into your lane, pull over to the side of the road, honk the horn and flash your lights. Contact police immediately if you witness a driver who appears to be driving suspiciously.
6. Keep a cool head on the road. Don't speed up to beat another vehicle to a traffic merge. Respect the right-of-way rule.
7. Don't tailgate another car. Always practice the three-second following distance or a three-second plus following distance.

Source: National Safety Council. Permission to reprint granted by the National Safety Council, a membership organization dedicated to protecting life and promoting health.

Avoiding Crashes

To avoid a crash, you have two choices: 1) Change direction by steering, or 2) Change speed by braking or accelerating.

- Steering: if you don't think you can stop in time, try to turn out of the way. If possible, stay off the brakes while you turn – you'll have more control.
- Braking: many drivers slam on the brakes to avoid a collision. Don't, unless you have anti-lock brakes (ABS). If you don't have anti-lock brakes, you should pump your brakes hard and fast. You'll have more control and stop faster.
- Acceleration: when another car is about to hit you from the side or rear, accelerating may soften the impact or prevent the collision.

Source: From Idaho Driver's Manual (2014)

Discuss:

1. Have you or someone you know had a "close call"?
2. Review your agency's vehicle use policy.