

Army *Safety* Gram

Leading on the Edge for Safety *Excellence*

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Driving Safety

There's no doubt that the many motions we go through every day are difficult and even occasionally dangerous. Driving just happens to be one of these dangers. More than 41,000 people died as a result of motor vehicle accidents in 2006. An additional three million people were injured. Clearly, changes need to be made in order to make driving a safer activity.



We sometimes hear drivers talking about a "dangerous mile" on the roads they travel. This may be an area where there is a blind curve, a steep hill, an uncontrolled intersection or heavy, fast-moving traffic. It is important to be aware of the particular hazards of any stretch of road. However, the most dangerous mile is always the mile right in front of you. That is the mile which needs your undivided attention and your very best driving skills to travel safely.

Whether you put in the miles at work or put in the miles on weekends and vacations, keep these safety tips in mind:

- ♦ Drive defensively. You must take action to prevent collisions in spite of bad driving by others. Safe driving includes the ability to adapt your driving to the situation.
- ♦ Wear your seatbelt and shoulder harness. These safety devices have been proven to reduce injuries and fatalities in a motor vehicle crash.
- ♦ Become familiar with all the controls on a vehicle before starting out. Adjust the seat and mirrors before setting a vehicle in motion.
- ♦ **Observe speed limits, and reduce your speed for corners or curves.**
- ♦ Get in the habit of reading all road warning signs. That way, you won't have to be surprised by curves and traffic lights that seem to appear out of nowhere; chances are there was a sign back there that told you it was coming up.
- ♦ Plan your route. This will avoid the temptation for last-minute exits from the freeway and U-turns in city traffic.
- ♦ Get the big picture. Watch for traffic in front of you, behind you and on both sides of your vehicle. Be alert for potential hazards such as car doors that could open, or children or pets that could run into the street. Watch out for drivers who could fail to stop at stoplights or suddenly veer into your lane.
- ♦ Fight fatigue. Start your trip well rested and alert. Avoid heavy foods before traveling. Take regular rest breaks and get out and stretch.
- ♦ Never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- ♦ Take advantage of driver training to improve and update your driving skills. Changes in vehicles and driving conditions require changes in driving habits.



Keep your mind on your driving and the traffic around you. The most dangerous mile is the one right in front of you, so give it your full attention whenever you drive.