

Army *Safety* Gram

Leading on the Edge for Safety *Excellence*

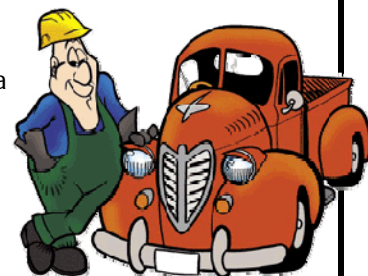
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24 September 2008

The Most Dangerous Mile is the Next One

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, high-speed traffic. These sections might have a history of frequent accidents or a few highly memorable accidents.

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 are a professional driver, or someone who puts in the miles on weekends and vacations, keep these safety tips in mind:

- ♦ **Drive defensively.** You must drive to prevent collisions in spite of incorrect actions of others and in spite of adverse conditions. These adverse conditions include light, weather, road, traffic, vehicle problems, and driver difficulties. You must adjust your driving to accommodate these conditions.
- ♦ **Wear your seatbelt and shoulder harness.** These safety devices have been proven to reduce injuries and fatalities in a motor vehicle crash. Insist all occupants of the vehicle buckle up.
- ♦ **Become thoroughly familiar with all the operating controls on a vehicle before starting out.** A poor time to be looking for your vehicle horn is when a truck is barreling down on you. Also adjust the seat and mirrors before setting the vehicle in motion.
- ♦ **Observe speed limits.** Believe your speedometer rather than your senses to reduce your speed for 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 which seem to appear out of nowhere; chances are there was a sign back there which 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. Watch for potential hazards such as car doors which could open, children or pets which could run into the street. Stay alert for vehicles which could fail to stop at stoplights or could veer into your lane.
- ♦ **Fight fatigue.** Start your trip well-rested and alert. Avoid heavy foods before traveling. Keep the driver's compartment well-ventilated with fresh air. Take regular rest breaks and get out and stretch.
- ♦ **Never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.** They can cause drowsiness, hallucinations, dizziness, poor judgment, and poor co-ordination.
- ♦ **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.

