

President's Message

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Former CVSA President Lt. Don Bridge once wrote, "Safety is not merely an enforcement issue. It touches on engineering, education and our ever-changing environment. Our collective goal must be to continue to push the trends even further in the right direction. In order to effectively accomplish our goal, we need to do more innovative thinking and step outside of our usual ways of conducting business."

Lt. Bridge's comments are as appropriate today as they were when they were first drafted.

I plan to draw on the strengths of our members and utilize the lessons learned in order to strengthen this organization and insure that we are innovative, progressive, knowledgeable, sustainable and prepared for what lies ahead in our next quarter century.

God Bless and stay safe!

Letters to the Editor

Old Habits... Can Get You in Trouble!

How many times have you opened your vehicle's door, sat in your seat, put on your seatbelt and put the vehicle in drive (or reverse) without even thinking about it? Or stopped at stop light, waited for the light to change and simply put your foot on the gas? Or, continued to follow the vehicle in front of you without considering the traffic flow?

There are many things we do everyday without thinking about them. However, recently released data shows that many of these everyday occurrences may not be as everyday as you think.

Intersection Collisions

Despite improved intersection design and more sophisticated applications of traffic engineering measures, intersection crashes continue to account for 48 percent of injury-related accidents and generate \$101 billion of societal costs each year (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

The area in and around intersections is more prone to crashes because many vehicles are crossing paths at the same time and there often are abrupt changes in speed and direction. Fortunately, analysis of our data of incidents at intersections clearly reveals that drivers can protect themselves simply by remembering and applying fundamental driving skills.

Analysis of intersection collisions reveals that more than 75 percent could have been avoided if drivers were more visually attentive and applied the fundamental driving rules of looking left-right-left, looking farther ahead and coming to a complete stop at red lights and stop signs, as well as looking before proceeding through intersections.

As the following chart illustrates, 39 percent of drivers involved in intersection incidents did not look left-right-left, one of the first lessons taught in driver education courses. Ten percent did not stop at a red light and six percent did not come to a complete stop at a stop sign and look before crossing the intersection.

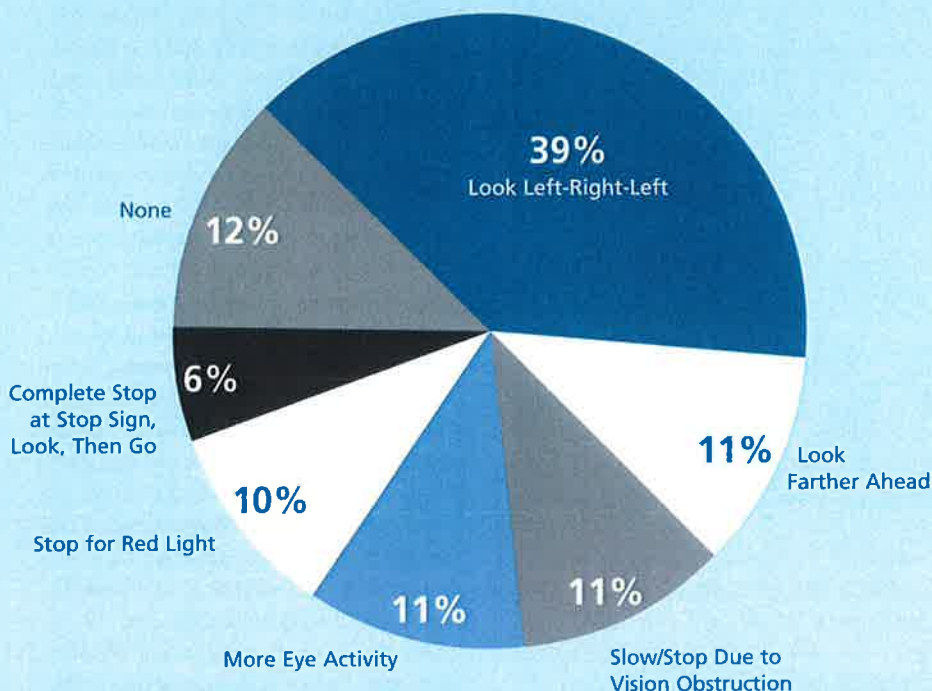
Looking left-right-left, coming to complete stops at red lights and looking before crossing intersections are driving fundamentals that should be part of every driver's skillset, but often these are overlooked because we travel through intersections everyday and nothing bad happens to us. Subconsciously, this is reinforcing our bad habits. Coaching drivers to be more visually attentive is key to reducing intersection collisions.

Following Distance

Rear end crashes are the second most common claim for most fleet operators (*Risk Management News*, Volume 1, Issue 2), regardless of industry. They make up 17 percent of all claims and cost over \$13,000 per claim. Although recommended following distances can vary by weight and size of vehicle, most nationally recognized driver training programs advocate a minimum following distance of three or four seconds.

There is no greater risk of being struck from the rear when the subject vehicle is maintaining less than two seconds than having greater than two seconds following distance. However, the story is different when it comes to the subject vehicle rear ending the vehicle ahead. Incidents involving the subject rear ending the lead vehicle where the subject vehicle had less than two seconds of following distance was almost three times as common as those where the

Driver Actions that Would Have Prevented an Incident at an Intersection



Risk InfoCenter™ by DriveCam

driver was maintaining a distance of two seconds or greater.

The study also showed that a large number of rear end crashes involve a change in speed by the lead vehicle or an interruption to the flow of traffic in the lane. In fact, more rear end crashes (40 percent) happen in the farthest right lane than other lanes when on city streets. The right lane has pedestrians, parked cars and turning vehicles that are constantly disturbing traffic flow. Following this same logic, the left most lane was next most frequent (27 percent) since this lane can be impacted by traffic slowing or

stopping to make a left turn. The center lane only represented two percent of the rear end crashes despite being present in eight percent of the incidents. This may be due to the fact that the center lane has fewer traffic flow disturbances.

Whether it's following distance or intersection collisions, it's important to never take your daily driving habits for granted. More importantly, coach your fleet drivers to reduce their risky driving habits and lower their chance of incidents on the road.

Del Lisk, DRIVECAM

ABS Testing

CVSA Level VI Inspection Procedures now include ABS inspections according to an announcement in the Third Quarter 2008 *Guardian*.

I have observed during installation, training, and demonstrations that a good percentage of trailer anti-lock brakes (ABS) would not pass a Level VI inspection for very simple reasons.

Much of the time, power is not being delivered to the Engine Control Unit (ECU) or the ABS warning lamp. In general, the ECU's are very reliable and most of the ABS service is power delivery and sensor issues.

Typically, the fleet testing process is working with an unknown low power 12 volt system such as battery chargers and discharged batteries. And unfiltered unregulated power sources may damage the ECU. In any case, the testing process is flawed if the power source is not adequate.

During the test, circuit faults for the brake and auxiliary circuits may not be detected. Too often the testing device does not perform an adequate diagnostic and the technician glosses over the circuit problem.

Fleets have discovered ABS pays in many ways – improved safety, driving characteristics, tire wear, brake wear. Improved testing processes are necessary for this electronic age.

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CVSA's *Guardian* welcomes your letters and comments. To submit a letter send an email to communications@cvsa.org or write to CVSA, c/o *Guardian*, 1101 17th Street, NW, Suite 803, Washington, DC 20036.