

SCF Arizona your business partner in Workers Compensation Insurance and workplace safety



Driving Safely, Defensively Saves Lives

Provided by Wendell Macnab
Association Coordinator

Higher gas prices and a down economy may have helped save lives in 2008, as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administrations reports that 2008 had the lowest number of traffic fatalities in 47 years. Still, 37,300 people dead, a 9 percent drop compared to 2007, are too many.

Where fatalities occur, often passengers and drivers suffer minor, severe or critical injuries resulting in costly medical bills, repair fees, lost work days, wages and higher insurance rates. Property damage from vehicle crashes also costs businesses billions of dollars each year.

The NHTSA says that almost all crashes can be avoided by using defensive driving techniques every time you get behind the wheel.

Safety restraints

Safety belts and air bags provide protection by:

- Keeping you in control so you can react quickly;
- Preventing you from colliding with the steering wheel, windshield and other passengers;
- Spreading the force of the crash over the strongest parts of your body, the shoulders and hips;
- Keeping you inside the vehicle where you're less likely to be injured or killed.

Steer your way to safety

Here are some defensive driving techniques that can help you avoid crashes:

- Increase the space between your vehicle and passing vehicles;
- Use caution when approaching an intersection;
- Keep your wheels straight when preparing to make a left-hand turn to keep from being pushed into traffic from a vehicle that hits you from behind;
- Use your signals well in advance every time you are turning or changing lanes.
- Do not be distracted by using a cell phone, eating, reading or doing something other than driving;
- Create an "safety cushion" that allows for adequate stopping distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you;
- Check your rearview and side mirrors often. If a vehicle is too close, let the driver pass so you can maintain your safety cushion;
- Drive in the right lane when possible to lessen the chances of a head-on collision.

If you are involved in a crash, do these things;

1. Pull out of oncoming traffic if you are able to
2. Notify the proper law enforcement entity
3. Offer assistance to anyone who has been injured
4. Fill out an accident report form as needed by the law enforcement entity, your employer and the insurance provider

If you would like more information on workplace safety please contact your Association Coordinator Wendell Macnab

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