SAFETY BULLETIN

What You Don’t See, Can Kill You

Good drivers continuously shift their attention near then far and from side-to-side, looking for potential problems. All of this is critical to accident prevention. You cannot afford to be surprised by situations developing behind or to the sides of your vehicle.

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND YOUR VEHICLE.

Regular checks of your mirrors will let you know what traffic is doing around your vehicle. If a potentially hazardous condition develops in front of you, you need to know whether you can safely make a lane change or break quickly without fear of a collision. Use your mirrors to spot vehicles that are traveling fast enough to overtake you or are following in an unsafe manner.

Be particularly mindful of emergency vehicles requiring the right of way. If you are traveling in the right hand (curb) lane, your left mirror is most important. However, if you are in a center lane of a multi-lane highway you must watch both the left and right mirrors.

“Blind spots” refer to a space next to your vehicle where another vehicle is hidden from view for a few seconds while passing you. You need to know if a vehicle is ready to move into that area where you cannot see them. As a rule of thumb you should check your mirrors every 5 to 8 seconds. Special situations require more frequent mirror checks. These include lane changes, turns, merges, and tight maneuvers.

When you check your mirrors, check quickly. Develop the habit of looking back and forth between the mirrors and the road ahead. Keep your eyes moving and don’t focus on the mirrors too long. Conditions in front of you can change in a few seconds, so expect the unexpected.

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