



## INTERSECTION SAFETY

December 2019

The safety topic this month is safe driving in and around intersections. Intersections are something we take for granted and don't get the safety awareness attention they need.

The most common intersection is the "standard" cross configuration where two streets cross each other. There are other types of intersections like the traffic circle or "roundabout" and most recently the "divergent diamond."

We will focus on the standard "cross" intersection and tips for being safe while using this most common type of intersection.

Commercial vehicles bring several unique challenges to intersection safety. Most commercial vehicles accelerate more slowly than passenger cars. They also take longer to stop. Tractor-trailer combinations must make wide turns which is difficult in high traffic areas.

A professional driver must live by the statement of, "I NEVER have the right-of-way." A professional driver must make adjustments for all the "regular" drivers who may not see the traffic control device or just choose not to stop. It is frustrating but we must do everything "reasonable" to avoid a crash.

Some tips to share with your drivers to avoid intersection accidents include:

- Approach EVERY intersection controlled by traffic signals as if the signal will change at ANY time.
  - Our industry has taught the "stale green" theory for many years. This cannot be relied on with most intersections now controlled by traffic sensors. You may have a solid green but another vehicle will "trigger" the light and can cause it to change to yellow then red very quickly.

- Make decisions at intersections based on the theory that EVERY car could run the light.
- A caution light means be ready to STOP, not go faster.
- Make FULL stops for stop sign controlled intersections. Rolling stops might make shifting easier to keep the load moving, but they do not allow for traffic to flow correctly and could result in a citation.
- Be aware of vehicles on side streets using the "right turn on red after stop" where legal. Some passenger cars (and even commercial vehicles) will pause at the light and continue with their turn. If they don't make a good decision on the "gap" of space available they could pull directly into the path of our driver.
- Watch side streets for vehicles that may not stop before entering traffic. It is widely known that many drivers will try to "beat" the big truck that is coming towards the intersection. Remember a stop sign or light cannot "stop" the vehicle. It takes the driver who is engaged in the driving process to see and obey the traffic control device.
- Use extra caution when turning left in a yield situation. Make sure visibility is good and that there is plenty of time to complete the turn.
- Avoid internal and external distractions at all times to be safe.

The holidays bring extra volumes of traffic and drivers who may be in a hurry. Remind your drivers to take their time and be focused at intersections to help them deliver their loads and come home safely.



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