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Take Aways

1. First brake then steer.

Commit to the brakes until the car is stopped. In an ABS car, in a panic stop, the steering works better with brakes fully engaged. If you add steering to braking, the car will be more controllable. If you add braking to steering, you risk losing control.

2. Adjust the seat.

Sit up straight with shoulders against seat back, hands at 3 and 9 at the wheel, bend in the elbows. Adjust your seat so that with your arms extended to top of steering wheel wrists break at the wheel. Cars weren't designed for slouching. It puts your head down and your knees get too close to the pedals.

3. Look as far down the road as you can see.

The sooner you see things, the more time you have to react.

4. Check tire pressure regularly.

An under-inflated tire will respond unpredictably in an emergency.

5. Cars are safer than SUVs and Light Trucks.

SUVs and light trucks don't have to meet the same federal impact protection, rollover and handling standards that cars do.

6. It takes 2/10 of a second to blink.

During that time you travel 18 feet at 60 miles an hour. Every once in a while that 18 feet will be the difference between a crash and a near miss. How many feet will you use up checking your cell phone for calls?

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7. Hands-free does not mean distraction free.

Studies have shown that drivers are equally distracted from hands-free and hand-held devices. The implication is that if hand-held devices are illegal, hands-free must be safe. Actually, it is purely a marketing battle line between two giants. Laws against hand-held devices in cars clear the field for interactive dashboard displays that include social media provided by the car companies as a sales feature. (See Mercedes Benz ad, which shows a mouse in the console controlling the centrally mounted screen on the dashboard.)

8. Texting while driving is more than a bad habit.

It's a market driven addiction, and it's not just for kids, though they are the most vulnerable. Studies on the addictive nature of intermittent reward conditioning are not hard to find and are not controversial. Texting addiction among new drivers, which is certainly one of the drivers of a 19% increase in 16-yr-old driving fatalities, is an unintended consequence of a wildly successful marketing strategy. The teen deaths are collateral damage.

9. Don't tailgate.

If you're a tailgater, your passengers are uncomfortable riding with you. It's a bad habit you can break.

10. Don't pump anti-lock brakes.

Anti-lock brakes automatically pump individual wheels as they approach lock-up. Additionally pumping the brakes just increases stopping distance.

11. Most of the damage your car receives over its lifetime will happen in parking lots.

Be extra careful there.

Want to learn more? Call or go online to register.

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