

DEFENSIVE DRIVING BASICS URBAN DRIVING HAZARDS

Driving in the city can be confusing because there is so much happening at once. And there are so many vehicles, pedestrians and directions to keep track of. All this is made worse when bad weather or darkness decreases your visibility. But you can survive the hazards of urban driving if you follow these tips:

- Scan the road ahead for obstacles such as double-parked cars, cars coming out of alleys and parking lots, and pedestrians. By planning ahead, you have plenty of time to change lanes safely.
- Avoid darting into another lane. Scan the lane for traffic, use your signal, and move into the lane gradually.
- Stop far enough behind the vehicle in front of you that can see where its rear tires touch the street. This distance gives you visibility and space to go around the vehicle if it stalls. Also, if someone hits you from behind, you won't be pushed into the vehicle ahead.
- If you're driving in the left lane and a double-parked vehicle or bus is in the right lane, watch out for cars that may pull into your lane from behind these obstacles.
- Keep calm. Driving in the city is frustrating, especially after a long day at work. But getting worked up about it won't do your health or your safety any good.
- Be prepared for inconsiderate behavior from other drivers. React by taking the safe course of action rather than the one that will teach the other driver a lesson.
- Know the rules for driving in intersections. Scan the road ahead as well as cross traffic before entering an intersection, even if you have the right-of-way. More than half of all city collisions occur in intersections.
- When scanning intersections, pay attention to the direction of traffic. One-way streets are common in cities.
- Plan your route in advance. If you still have to consult a map, get off the road before doing so.