



### Topic of the Month... Driver Safety (The Intersection Issue)

When each vehicle moves in its own lane without getting in the way of another vehicle, we all go our way smoothly. But not all of us travel in the same direction. Our line of traffic often must cross the paths of other vehicles, and that's when the trouble begins; the intersection issue. Everyone knows that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. But many drivers seem to forget that little law of physics when they plow through an intersection with little regard for the right of way. Do you approach each intersection with an attitude of courtesy? Do all of your drivers have the knowledge and skill to take the crossing in proper turns without incident? About a third of the auto accidents involving State of Georgia vehicles involve failure to yield. Traffic crossings should have no more terror for the disciplined driver than two pedestrians meeting on the sidewalk. Know the rules and observe them. But if the other driver is less than courteous, confused, misinformed, aggressive, and/or foolish, then let the less competent driver go through in order to avoid a mishap. One of the most commonly disregarded and misunderstood traffic signs are "yield" signs. At controlled intersections with traffic lights, a driver only has to observe the rules; slow down on the caution yellow light, come to a full stop on the red light, and go only after the light is green.



What to do at an uncontrolled intersection is a matter of judgment. If you have clear vision of the side road and the road ahead for an eighth of a mile or more, you can be reasonably sure of sailing on through the crossing at normal speed, right? But should you keep your foot on the accelerator? Wouldn't it be better to coast through the intersection with a foot poised over the brake pedal? Just in case of trouble you hadn't seen? Good drivers make it a habit to reduce speed at every intersection, stepping on the gas again only after they're sure. It is important to know the braking distance, so that you can slow down in time at intersections. If you're approaching a blind corner, your speed must be low enough for you to stop if a vehicle appears suddenly from either side.

If you're going 30 miles an hour, would that be slow enough for you to stop in time if a vehicle darted across at a blind corner? Panic stops can be almost as bad as collisions. If you're in the habit of waiting until the last moment to jam on the brakes in a screeching stop, you could easily find yourself in a scrape you can't drive away from. The good driver always drives defensively, especially at intersections. Some people insist on the silly defense of always having the "right-of-way" in a tight situation. Keep in mind that if the other driver is foolish or is in actual violation of the law, you can die in an intersection crash regardless of who may have had the right-of-way. Always be ready to give a little, or a lot, to save a life. YOU LOSE in this "tie" situation.

To avoid collisions at intersections, observe all safety rules and traffic regulations faithfully; and approach, enter, turn and cross intersections slowly and with caution. Always maintain control of your vehicle allowing adequate time to evaluate each situation before getting involved. The defensive driver waits for the proper turn, and even foregoes their right-of-way when in doubt or when it will prevent an accident. The better driver observes the other vehicle's signals but does not depend on them entirely. We must be prepared for sudden changes of direction or speed.

The defensive driver is always conscious of their place in the traffic pattern and can make wise decisions accordingly. When vision is obscured by anything—they automatically slow down. Know how to stay out of intersection collisions.

**Thanks for your time. Let's work together to make Georgia a safer place to work.**