

SafeDriver Monthly Newsletter

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Driving Safely Without Driving

Holidays are a time for celebration and excitement. While these days of celebration may differ around the world, most are accompanied by a sense of camaraderie with others, fun activities, and socializing in group settings. Although not often required by the holiday, this can also include drinking or other such types of imbibing. When knowing ahead of time that this may be an activity in which you wish to participate, it's important to plan ahead how to get home if you will not be spending the night elsewhere.

Generally speaking, one drink equates to one hour in which a driver should wait before it is safe to get behind the wheel. One shot, one glass of wine, one beer. This is not true for everyone and should not be assumed to be true on an individual basis, but merely works as a rule of thumb. As the holidays beckon, preventative planning for how to return home or to stay the night where the activity occurs will help prevent an accident that could cost you your life or someone else theirs. While it may be an option to remain where drinking or other forms of imbibing take place for some, this is not true for everyone. Several options are available to still ensure a safe return trip.

Have a designated driver. Some people simply prefer not to drink or have personal reasons for not doing so. There is no harm in discussing with your friend group if someone is planning to abstain and asking if they are willing to ensure you return home safely. Keep in mind that this should only be asked of someone you trust and out of courtesy to them and safety for yourself you should still not be imbibing so heavily that you cannot control yourself or your actions. Try not to be offended if someone declines being a designated driver. While in their car and care they will be partially for you and some do not want that responsibility.

There are multiple pickup options including Lyft and Uber that are available widespread. This would function somewhat similarly to a cab as you would place the call, pay the fee,

and be picked up and dropped off at the addresses you give. However, these come with their own risks as you are choosing to enter into a vehicle with a driver you don't know.

Public transportation is often an option in more urban areas where buses and other commercial vehicles are available for passengers to ride. If not in an urban environment, you will need to do personal research to see if anything like this exists within your area.

Walking home is always an option if you live close enough to where the festivities take place. If you live further away from the event, catching a ride with a friend who is going back in a similar direction would get you closer to home if they are unable to drop you off at your door. Beyond this, look up what options are available for transportation in your area before leaving to celebrate.

Regardless of the option you may pick, it is safer for both you and others to never drink and drive.



Positioning Around Pedestrians

There is always potential for encountering pedestrians on the road regardless of location. From people who have pulled over on the side of major highways to children walking home in the neighborhood, being aware of pedestrians and helping to support their safety through safe driving practices is a job shared by every driver.

Although pedestrians may be encountered at any time while on the road, the likelihood of such a scenario greatly increases during holidays, major events, and community festivals/activities. While it is inarguably the job of the pedestrian to make safe choices to prevent bodily harm such as using crosswalks and sidewalks, drivers also bear the responsibility of trying to prevent undue death or injury which can occur when either or both parties are distracted.

When in a commercial area, look to see if there are pedestrians walking near the road or cycling within a bike lane. Give them where possible and keep in mind that, especially when children are present, they may accidentally step too far into the roadway rather than remaining in their designated zone. While this is neither your fault nor your responsibility if these occurs, keeping an eye out for potential hazards could help reduce the odds of a potential devastating accident.

If a ball suddenly rolls into the road and you have the room to brake swiftly safely do so. While this can happen anywhere, it is statistically more likely to happen in a neighborhood

where more children may be present, and there may be someone chasing closely behind it. This also holds true for other toys or objects. Children are less aware of their surroundings than adults, and it only takes a second of inattention to cause lifelong injury or death.



Several thousands of pedestrians are killed yearly in automotive related crashes. The risk of such a crash significantly increases when drivers are inattentive to their surroundings. It only takes a few seconds of inattention, less time than it takes to type out the average text message, for something devastating to occur.

Some simple ways to practice safe driving around pedestrians is to always keep an eye out for crowded sidewalks or cyclists in the road, avoid inattention by putting down your phone and setting up whatever is needed for your trip within your car before placing it into drive, and braking when it is safe to do so if an object suddenly appears in front of your vehicle. Following these simple guidelines can and will help prevent you from being part of the thousands of yearly crashes that result in pedestrian death. Act as you hope other drivers will when you are the one on the crosswalk.

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Approaching Objects in the Road

While driving, you will come across objects in the road that may or may not be accompanied by people using or removing them. Depending upon where you are driving and how quickly you are moving, there are several different methods to approaching and navigating around them for the safety of the people in and outside of the car as well as the integrity of the vehicle.

When approaching objects in the road, it is important to keep in mind personal safety, vehicular safety and damage, and potential pedestrians. Objects in the road may be there before you approach or could appear suddenly. In the case of the latter, check to see whether the other lane is clear or if another car is following closely behind you. You will need to decide based on those answers whether it is safe to go into the other lane to avoid the sudden object or if you have the space or time to hit the brakes to avoid running into it. If you cannot avoid the object safely and it is not a large road hazard, it may be better to run over it rather than putting yourself or surrounding drivers at risk with sudden road maneuvers.

No one wants to risk running over an object in the road and risk having it damage their car. While the preferred option is for there not to be anything in the road in the first place, this will happen on occasion. Many drivers in the USA will find themselves needing to navigate potential road debris, especially in neighborhoods, near the fourth of July as it is popular practice to launch fireworks for the holiday. Check to see if other cars are approaching and to ensure that any people standing near the road have given enough space for you to safely drive around what is in the road without potentially hitting a pedestrian. While this holiday may see an uptake in hospital visits, no one wants it to be due to a crash.



When determining safety, it's also important to realize that some objects may be placed in the road that are meant to cause harm to drivers and their passengers. There have been dozens of cases of kidnappings and deaths of people who stopped to remove something from the road that was intentionally placed there by another party that was waiting out of sight. When coming across something in the road know it is not your responsibility to remove it and observe whether it has fully blocked access to the road or is navigable around. If it has fully blocked the road and you suspect it may have been placed there intentionally do not leave your car. Put your car into reverse if you have the space and turn to go back down the road where you came. If there isn't space or you see people rapidly approaching your vehicle, drive over whatever is in the road and dial your emergency hotline as soon as possible., In cases like this, it is far preferable to have a damaged car than risk personal safety and life.

If you come across debris within the road or highway, call your local emergency hotline to report it. The presence of a potential road hazard is an emergency that needs to be reported quickly to prevent potential harm.

