

Unsafe lane changes

Risk Control Services

You mistakenly move into a lane without checking to see if a car is in the next lane or you pass a car without checking for oncoming traffic. The next thing you know, one of the top causes of car accidents has just taken place.

What is meant by an “unsafe lane change?”

Unsafe lane changes can be as simple as changing lanes without signaling or by starting to signal after you began the lane change. It may also be from changing into a lane where the following car was forced to brake in order to make room, or even brake too hard in order for the vehicle to maintain a safe following distance.

Unsafe lane changes can occur when you make a lane change too quickly as a result of road conditions or the type of vehicle being driven. The point is that unsafe lane changes cause accidents that can result in devastating aftermaths.

Preventing unsafe lane changes

When operating a vehicle and using the vehicle’s mirrors, it’s also critical to look over to the left or right to make sure there is no one in your blind spot before making a lane change. Changing lanes can become even more challenging depending on road conditions such as traffic and weather.

If you drive a larger vehicle, it might be a good idea to install proper blind proof (convex) mirrors so that lane changes can be done safely.

Examples of unsafe lane changes

- Changing lanes without making sure there are no vehicles next to you or any coming towards you if you are passing another vehicle.
- Failing to signal before making a lane change.
- Driving in the middle of two lanes for an extended period of time.



It is fairly easy to prevent an unsafe lane change and avoid accidents, by using common sense. It just takes knowing how to make a safe lane change instead of a risky one.

A few basic rules for avoiding accidents by merging safely

- *Always* use your turn signals.
- Only change one lane at a time.
- Never change lanes in an area where the lanes are separated by solid lines, only do so around dashed lines.
- Do not speed up to change lanes.
- Never cut anyone off while changing lanes.
- Don’t change lanes in an intersection, or immediately prior to reaching intersections. Wait until you’re through the intersection and then change lanes.

Knowledge of basic “rules of the road” and defensive driving concepts will help you in avoiding needless and preventable lane change related motor vehicle accidents.

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