

Evasive Action

Evasive action is defined as a maneuver aimed at physically avoiding something. Certainly, there are emergency situations that occur suddenly and require the use of evasive actions. However, a large percentage of these “emergencies” don’t suddenly pop up; they are simply suddenly noticed. These situations could have, *and should have*, been noticed in plenty of time to slow down. Still others are noticed well in advance, but the driver does not want to slow down, choosing instead to steer around the problem.

Now ask yourself how many times you have seen vehicles swerve around another vehicle or object, rather than slowing down first to make a controlled maneuver or simply wait to avoid an incident. For example, this commonly occurs on two-lane roads when a vehicle slows down to make a turn and the vehicle behind swerves into the oncoming traffic lane to get by without slowing down. This exact maneuver causes many incidents every year. In fact, there have been numerous crashes that occur when the turning vehicle slows to make a LEFT turn and the following vehicle, not paying attention, attempts to pass on the left just as the turn starts. The following vehicle obviously crashing into the driver’s side of the turning vehicle in front of it.

Driving requires constant attention and focus on the driving task. Impatience and distractions can turn an otherwise simple maneuver into a panicked evasive action, which rarely turns out as “evading” a crash but rather “causing” a crash. As a driver, it is easy to become impatient after a day on the road, but the real pros don’t let it affect how they react behind the wheel. The real pros are the ones who drive trip after trip, year after year and still avoid preventable accidents. Are they just lucky? Not a chance - they are exposed to the same driving environment that every other driver faces. They use their training and experience to avoid unnecessary and dangerous evasive actions.