

- drivers on the through highway, if you are at a “T” intersection and you are entering the through highway by either making a right or left turn;
- other drivers, if you are approaching an intersection with a Yield sign facing you.

Death is 8 times more probable in a crash at 60 mph than at 20 mph! The impact of hitting a solid stationary object at 60 mph is equal to falling off a 10-story building!

C. Understanding Vehicle Speed

The posted speed limit is the maximum legal speed you can travel on a road under ideal conditions. Maintaining a safe speed at all times is a responsibility shared by all motorists.

It is safest to drive at the same speed that most traffic is moving, up to the maximum speed limit. In fact, traveling at a speed lower than other traffic encourages other vehicles to constantly pass you and increases the chances of a crash.

1. Speeding

Excessive speed is one of the most common contributing factors of vehicle crashes. Excessive speed does not save time and often leads to high-risk decision-making.

Excessive vehicle speed has severe and often times disastrous effects because it:

- reduces the ability to negotiate curves or maneuver around obstacles in the roadway;
- extends the distance necessary for a vehicle to stop;
- decreases the driver’s ability to realize and react to a hazard or dangerous situation;
- increases the risk of crashes because other roadway users and pedestrians may not be able to judge distance accurately;
- increases the force and impact in a crash, which more likely results in serious bodily injuries and deaths.

2. Appropriate Speed for Conditions

Drivers must recognize and adjust their speed to adverse conditions. Maryland Vehicle Law requires that motorists drive at a reasonable and prudent speed and with a regard for existing and potential hazards. You may drive slower than the posted speed limit, based on road conditions, but it is illegal to drive any faster than the posted speed limit.

Some conditions, which require reduced speed for safety, include:

- sharp curves or hills – where visibility is limited;
- slippery roads;
- roads where there may be pedestrians or animals present;
- shopping centers, parking lots and downtown areas;
- traffic congestion;
- narrow bridges and tunnels;
- toll plazas;
- schools, playgrounds and residential streets;
- railroad grade crossings.

D. Following Distance

Always maintain a safe distance between your vehicle and the one ahead of you. Most rear-end collisions are caused by following too closely. A minimum following distance of 3 to 4 seconds is recommended under ideal driving conditions. This means it takes you 3 to 4 seconds to get to the same reference point as the car ahead of you. To determine if you are following at a safe distance, choose a fixed object ahead, such as a bridge,