



Precision Driving Training Center

Travel Safety Tips

Automobile Break downs

What you do if your car breaks down depends a lot on where it breaks down; in all cases, do your best to get the car off the road or at least onto the shoulder before you do anything to it. A few hints:

- Wherever you are -- freeway or highway -- if you're stuck in the center of a busy road (e.g. on the center divider or in the traffic lane of a road without shoulders or dividers) don't leave your car and try to walk across the road if you're not absolutely certain you can make it across without being hit (on large busy freeways you have no chance at all of getting across untouched). If it's a truly busy road, someone will call the relevant authorities before long on their cell phone anyway, as you're bound to be causing traffic backups. Always leave your hood up as a sign that there's something wrong with your car if you're stuck in the center of the road.
- Always use your hazard lights if they're working; and if you stay in the car keep your seat belt on. If you get out of the car, keep facing the traffic, and be prepared to run further down the center divide or shoulder in case vehicles appear to be heading straight towards you. It's unfortunately true that vehicles stopped in the center divider or in a traffic lane have a fair chance of being hit from behind by cars whose drivers aren't paying attention.
- On rural freeways and highways, if you're a long way from any town, the best thing to do is wait for a OHP car to stop and help. Make sure it's obvious that your car has broken down -- open the hood. Someone may stop and offer assistance.
- If you're on an urban or suburban freeway or highway, try to pull over as safely as possible, then see if it looks possible, and safe, to walk off an off-ramp or the side of the freeway to a pay phone to arrange a tow. If this isn't possible (e.g. you're in a bad neighborhood, or it's too dangerous to walk), you're probably best staying with the car, again making it clear that there's been a breakdown.

- On any other urban or suburban road, try to secure your car and find the nearest pay phone to arrange a tow (or whatever).
- Only call 911 from a mobile phone for a real emergency. Mobile phone 911 calls are handled from a central location which is currently grossly overloaded; the calls to 911 asking for traffic information, towing help, and the like are not appreciated by the 911 dispatchers (who nevertheless have to answer them).

Automobile Accident

All parties to an accident must stop and offer up all license information to all affected parties and law officers. The operator of a motor vehicle which is in any manner involved in a collision upon any road, street, highway or elsewhere within the state of Oklahoma resulting in bodily injury to or death of any person or in which it is apparent that damage to one vehicle or other property is in excess of Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00) a written report of such collision shall be filed with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) within six (6) months if no insurance settlement is received. Of course your insurance agent will also want to hear about the problem.