



“BE PATIENT – DON’T BE A PATIENT”

Accidents can happen because of conditions -- the condition of the road, the weather conditions, the condition of your vehicle or someone else’s vehicle, traffic conditions. But sometimes, the most important condition is that of the driver.

Your physical and mental condition determine how important those other conditions may be in any situation. When you are in top condition, you can cope with a lot tougher traffic, weather, even mechanical problems in a vehicle, and especially with bad driving by others.

Your mental condition involves your attitude when you are driving, especially feelings of impatience. You need to be patient so you won’t be *a* patient in some hospital.

We all generally want to move quickly, to get where we’re going quickly. But if we get impatient and don’t allow for the mistakes other drivers make, or take chances ourselves -- push to beat another vehicle, for example, or slip through a right turn without stopping for the red light -- all those impatient things we do in order to keep moving might result in our not moving at *all*. We need to move quickly, but above all we need to keep moving.

There are several situations where our impatience can push us to take a chance we shouldn’t. Think about whether or not you have exercised patience and control when you are in these situations.

First, don’t rush ahead when your light turns green. You have the right to, but remember: Somebody else who’s a bit impatient could be rushing into the intersection trying to beat the red light. Let them. And don’t be the one trying to beat the change from yellow to red by accelerating into the intersection. Remember, the yellow means you ought to stop if you have time.

If there is another vehicle in an intersection, or moving over from another lane, give way to it -- don’t try to squeeze past.

Adjust your speed to conditions of weather, roads, and traffic. Make your speed changes smoothly, and leave yourself plenty of room to stop or to take some evasive action so you won’t have to hit the brakes too hard. Your hard stop can hurt passengers, damage cargo, or cause the vehicle behind you to crash into the rear of yours.

Don’t hurry to pass some other vehicle. Watch for those signals that tell you when it’s safe. Make sure you have room, make sure somebody else isn’t trying to pass you at the same time, and make sure other drivers know what you plan to do. Be sure before you try it.

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When you are pulling onto the roadway from a parking space or from a driveway, don't rush out to beat the oncoming vehicle. Make certain that you have enough room to get your speed up to the speed of the traffic already in the roadway.

You might not have many rail crossings, but remember they are dangerous. In a collision with a train, the train is not going to come out second best. In fact, you are 30 times more likely to die in a collision if it is at a railroad crossing than if it is with another motor vehicle. There are nearly 5,000 accidents at railroad crossings each year, and they result in nearly 2,000 injuries and over 600 deaths.

And give that pedestrian time to get across the road. Don't rush, don't squeeze by -- let the pedestrian get all the way over. The pedestrian who suddenly stops in the spot you thought would be empty, the pedestrian who jumps into the path of another vehicle because you scared him or her -- those people are pretty defenseless -- as you might be, in court.

Be Patient.