

*"For safety's sake—do something."*

## Rental Car / Driving Safety

Accidents can happen in an instant. Taking your mind off the road to adjust your mirror, to set the GPS, or to look for the heat / AC controls can quickly lead to an accident. Spending a few seconds getting to know your rental vehicle before you drive off the lot can help keep you safe, not to mention others around you on the road.

### *Getting to know the rental car.*

- Walk around the car and snap photos of all panels. If there's damage, mark that down on your paperwork. The photos will come in handy if the rental agency tries to hold you responsible for damage later.
- Visually check the tires to be sure they are well inflated and that there is no significant, uneven tread wear, that could indicate a problem with the vehicle.
- Make sure the mirrors and seats are properly adjusted.
- Look to see if any warning lights are on.
- Set the GPS and all of the controls.
- Sync your phone for hands-free operation.
- Learn how to control the heat, AC, lights, and windshield wipers.
- Check the gas gauge.
- Take the car for a quick spin around the lot: turning, braking, and listening. If there is a problem or a strange sound, it is best to find out now before you get on the road.
- Keep your eyes on the road, this is likely unfamiliar territory.

### *When driving in bad weather conditions.*

- Slow down! You will most likely not be familiar with how the rental car reacts to different weather conditions.
- Leave room in front – When driving in the rain, snow, or ice, double the distance between your car and the vehicle in front, since it will take longer for the car to stop in these conditions.
- Take your time – accidents are more likely to happen if you are in a hurry to get to your destination. Plan your day accordingly, so you do not feel pressure to be in a rush.
- If the wipers are on, turn the headlights on.
- Don't use cruise control.

### *If you get into an accident while in a rental car.*

- Call 911 – even if no one is injured, police will file a report of the accident, which you might need when filing a claim. They will also help with traffic control.
- Stay in the vehicle – many times, it is safer inside the vehicle, unless it exposes you to risk. Keep an eye out for other traffic. If you do exit the vehicle, be aware of moving traffic, downed wires, or other dangers.
- Exchange and collect information – if the car accident involves another driver and vehicle, exchange information with them. Details like your names, addresses, license plate numbers, vehicle information, insurance companies, policy numbers, and the information of any witnesses who were present. If you have the rental car information, provide that in place of your personal information.
- Document the accident – photograph all the damage to both vehicles, as well as any injuries you or your passengers have. Documenting the accident will make filing a claim easier.
- Once you have done all of the above, normally you would contact your car insurance company, but if you get into a car accident in a rental car, you might want to contact the rental car company first. They may provide towing or roadside assistance.

