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LOSS CONTROL BULLETIN

Reducing Motor Vehicle Blind Spots

Fact: In 2008, there were 37,261 fatalities due to motor vehicle-related accidents.

Being unaware of vehicles in your “blind spot” can put you, your passengers and other motorists in danger of a motor vehicle accident. Blind spots are areas that cannot be seen by the operator of the vehicle through the side or rearview mirrors. Often, bigger vehicles and shorter drivers are the most likely to have “blind spots.”

Although many car companies are developing new technologies to help limit the dangers of blind spots, making a few simple adjustments to your rearview and side mirrors will help you to virtually eliminate all blind spots you may have in your vehicle. This will help save you money while also keeping you, your family and other drivers on the road safe.

Mirror Adjustment

Many motorists fail to properly position their mirrors, often leading to a reduced or limited range of vision. One common mistake is turning the side mirrors too far inward, giving the operator three mirrors showing the exact same or similar angles. One quick test is to closely examine what can be seen through your side mirrors. If you can see even a small sliver of your car, you know that your side mirrors are turned too far inward.

If you determine that your mirrors are in need of realignment, adjusting can be a quick and simple process.

- Start by positioning your rearview mirror. This should be moved so that you can see the entire back window of your car.
- To properly align your driver’s side mirror, lean over until your head rests on the window. Move the mirror outward just past where you can see the edge of your car.
- To adjust the passenger side mirror, sit in the driver’s seat. Lean towards the passenger side until your head is in the center of the car. Move the mirror just past where you can see the edge of the car.

To test whether you have properly positioned your mirrors, watch for an approaching car. First, watch the car in your rearview mirror. As it is about to leave your rearview mirror, the car should simultaneously enter your side mirror. As the vehicle leaves the side mirror, it should enter your peripheral vision at the same time. You should be able to see this without moving your head. If the car disappears for any amount of time during this test, you will know that you do not have your mirrors positioned correctly, and you need to make a few more adjustments. It is essential that you check your mirrors each and every time you operate a vehicle. A mirror may have been re-adjusted by the last driver or simply bumped out of position.

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Unfortunately, all drivers do not follow this method of reducing their blind spots. As a result, you should spend as little time as possible in another vehicle's blind spot. A good rule of thumb to remember when you are to the left or right rear of another vehicle is to look to see if you can see their rearview mirror. If you cannot see their mirror, then they cannot see you.

This method of adjusting your mirrors can take some time to get used to. However, if you are willing to follow the above suggestions, you will greatly decrease the danger associated with motor vehicle blind spots. This will help keep you, your family and other motorists safe on the road.



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