

THE RIGHT-OF-WAY

According to National Safety Council, “angle collisions” cause the greatest number of deaths. Many of these motor vehicle accidents involved a driver's failure to yield the right-of-way. Many people died because a driver failed to give another motorist the courtesy of the road. How many times do you find yourself in a me-first situation—too bullheaded to give up the road?



Right-of-way is probably one of the most misunderstood of all driving rules. It simply refers to a motorist's right to cross an intersection ahead of another vehicle.

This rule was established to determine the order of preference of all vehicles traveling on our streets and highways. Without right-of-way rules, driving would be a mass of confusion, with drivers always trying to beat each other through an intersection. Right-of-way rules are designed for all of our safety.

What are some of the precautions you can take to prevent right-of-way accidents? A relatively simple solution is to yield the right-of-way in every situation, whether or not law requires it. To be more specific, if there is any doubt about there being enough room to pass on a narrow stretch of roadway, let the other vehicle go first. When entering a freeway, yield the right-of-way to vehicles already traveling the freeway. Those vehicles should not have to alter their speed or swerve to make room for your approach. Don't jump the gun at a four-way stop. The first to come to a complete stop should be given the right-of-way. Since failure to yield the right-of-way is the second most frequent violation involved in fatal accidents, a good driver should be thoroughly familiar with right-of-way rules. Knowing when you do have the right-of-way is not as important as knowing when you don't. By following the basic rule that it is the responsibility of every driver to do everything possible to protect other drivers and pedestrians, we will greatly reduce the possibility of an accident.

Remember, accidents don't just happen. Many are caused by drivers who violate the rules of the road. Obey these rules, drive safely and whenever in doubt, yield the right-of-way.