

Safety Tips for SUV Drivers

The popularity of sport utility vehicles (SUVs) has never been higher, even with the increasing costs of fuel and growing concern for the environment. Reports from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) continue to portray SUVs as dangerous vehicles, with higher rollover than many cars or trucks. As the number of SUV's on the road reaches over 15 percent of the total number of vehicles, drivers are warned that an SUV will not handle the same way as another type of vehicle. The Automobile Club of Southern California (ACSC) has ten safety tips for SUV drivers to try and keep both the driver and the passengers, as well as other drivers on the road around them, safe.

Tips for SUV drivers

- **Learn to drive your SUV** - Practice driving in a large, empty space, such as an unused parking lot, under different conditions to get used to the brakes, steering and overall handling.
- **Avoid sudden or sharp steering changes** - An SUV is not designed to make fast, sharp turns, and handles differently than a lower bodied sedan.
- **Be considerate of other drivers** - While your driving position may have improved — placing you higher, with better visibility — drivers behind and along side you can see much less. Drivers behind you have much less warning that you're going to stop, since they cannot see what is in front of you, making you more likely to be hit from the rear.
- **Recognize your visual limitations** - The dark tinted windows in many SUVs make it difficult for an SUV driver to know what's traveling alongside or behind his or her vehicle. Check your mirrors to make sure they minimize your blind spots on either side.
- **Brake better** - SUVs require greater braking distance than most automobiles, especially in bad weather.
- **Buckle up** - With the higher potential for rollovers in an SUV, drivers should be especially careful to wear seatbelts.
- **Slow down** - Most people drive too fast. Slow down and drive defensively, which gives you more time to react in an emergency.
- **Avoid overloads** - A full load of cargo or even passengers raises the center of gravity even more, which makes the vehicle even more apt to roll over.
- **Don't carry too much weight** - Overloading causes wear and tear to brakes, can overheat tires, and increases the risk of a blowout.
- **Maintain your vehicle properly** - Periodic service and close attention to tires and tire pressure help protect you and your passengers.

SUVs, minivans, and pickups handle differently than cars. Driver knowledge and experience is particularly important in poor weather, as SUVs require more braking distance than smaller automobiles, which is vital to know to avoid accidents on slippery roads.

In addition, SUVs and trucks have a high center of gravity, which can cause drivers to lose control when they turn suddenly. And not having your four-wheel drive engaged can also cause the vehicle to skid.

Perhaps the biggest threat to SUV drivers are rollovers, which generally occur when an SUV runs off the road and is tipped over by a curb, ditch, or soft soil. According to

the National Highway Transportation Safety Association, more than 10,000 people die each year in rollover accidents.

Keep Your Family Safe! Avoiding the “Rush” by allowing extra time, staying focused on the road without juggling cell phones, food, and child management, maintaining your vehicles in good running condition, keeping full attention to the roadway, traffic conditions, and driving defensively will all add to the enjoyment of your SUV and successfully keep your **Family Safe** as well as aid in keeping your insurance rates down.

This news release is brought to you by the commitment and assurance of the A.D. Dern Insurance Agency, Inc., keeping you up to date and aware of the ever changing California Insurance market place. Continue to check back with us for other insurance articles of interest.

Our Family Agency has been serving the Communities Insurance needs Since 1928!