



## MaineDOT Flash Facts

### Topic: Rear-end Collisions

#### Some Maine Crash Facts from 2002 to 2004:

- Rear End crashes account for 1/3 of all crashes in Maine resulting in 34 fatalities and more than 14,000 injuries.
- The two main contributors to Rear End crashes are:
  - ❖ **Distraction or Inattention** leading to 60% of Rear End crashes that resulted in 22 fatalities and nearly 10,000 injuries.
  - ❖ **Following the Vehicle Ahead Too Closely** was a factor in about one quarter of the Rear End crashes.

Other factors that lead to Rear End crashes are Unsafe Speed and Improper Passing.

About 9,000 Rear End crashes occur when roads are slick (wet, snowy or icy). There were 7 fatalities and 3,200 injuries.

Where do Rear End crashes happen?:

- Straight road sections – 16,000 (46%)
- Intersections – 13,000 (37%)
- Driveways – 3,500 (10%)
- Ramps/Interchanges – 800 (2.2%)

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The most common kind of car crash in Maine is the Rear-End collision. Almost one-third of all crashes fall into this category, according to the MaineDOT.

Rear-end crashes can be prevented. Here's what you can do:

- When Driving-Just Drive! Distraction is a major problem. Don't change the radio or talk on the cell phone - keep your eyes (and mind) on the road.
- Don't tailgate. Keep a 3 second gap between you and the car in front. Think of it as a safety barrier-because it is!



- Maintain a 4 to 5 second gap between you and the vehicle ahead in poor road conditions.
  - Constantly scan the roadside and check your mirrors to avoid getting into a collision.
  - Keep headrests at about the middle of the back of your head to minimize injury in the event of a collision.
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Which type of vehicle crash is most common? According to the MaineDOT, the answer is Rear End collisions.

- Most rear-end collisions take place when a driver is stopping or slowing in traffic.
  - Rear End crashes happen as often on straight stretches of road as at intersections. Watch ahead for traffic slowdowns at work zones and driveways.
  - Watch ahead for turning traffic, especially vehicles turning left, that may need to stop to allow oncoming traffic to clear.
  - When stopped, keep your wheels straight to prevent being pushed into oncoming traffic in the event you are rear-ended.
  - Keep an eye on your mirrors when stopped and leave an escape route.
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These days, your vehicle is likely to carry many of the conveniences of home. Such as music, comfortable seating, good food, hot drinks, a telephone, friends and family, even DVD Players. But these amenities could be contributing to a rise in the number of rear-end collisions. Why? Because these totally preventable rear end crashes are often caused by driver distraction. Here's what you can do.

- When you're driving, just drive. Don't allow that jelly doughnut, newspaper, cell phone or passenger distract you.
- Keep a safe distance between you and the car in front. It's a safety zone for you.
- Watch road and traffic conditions well ahead and adjust your speed accordingly – Keep an eye on what's going on behind you, too.
- Clearly show other drivers your intentions – brake slowly and always use your turn signal.
- When you're the vehicle ahead, avoid suddenly stopping or slowing down. If you are unsure of where you are going, safely pull off the road and avoid surprises for the car behind you.

**Be A Road Model.** Watch the vehicles both in front of and behind you, and don't cause a rear-end collision. Always wear your seat belts.