

## **Four Driving Maeuvers Which Can Save Your Life (Or Someone Else's)**

Most days, a drive in Texas is a pleasure. The sun is shining, you can break out your short sleeves, the open road is yours. Until the weather or a person gets in the way. Texans take pride in looking out for each other so read ahead for tips that won't just save you but might just aid one of your fellow Lone Star Staters.

### **Watch Out For Ice**

Out here, ice isn't exactly something you see every day—and that's part of the problem. Often, when it occurs, either the roads or the vehicle just aren't ready for it. Says DPS Trooper Lonny Haschel, public information officer for the Dallas-Forth Worth area: "The biggest factor is speed. We don't realize how it can affect traction—and don't think that having four-wheel drive will stop it. Monitor your local media and weather channels and you can always go to the Department of Transportation web site for road conditions."

Michael Miller of Dallas, who's lived in Texas for more than 30 years, remembers years ago when a sheet of ice found him around the Thanksgiving holidays. "I was headed out to DFW (Airport) to catch a plane and I'll never forget driving on that," Miller says. "You couldn't go more than 10 miles an hour or you were just asking for it. You had to go very slow and leave distances between cars—if someone would cut in it would be hard to break. I stayed in the right lane and just kept a steady pace."

Miller also has experienced icy bridges, a spot that often gets frozen first. "Drive it in low gear," he says. "I've had a stick shift sometimes and I would stay in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> gear the whole time on ice—it would help limit my speed."

### **Drunk Drivers**

Countless tragedies on the road involve alcohol every year. So what do you do if you sense a fellow driver is inebriated? "First, keep yourself safe and those around you," Trooper Haschel says. "Stay back from that drunk driver. If you have a passenger with you, pull to the shoulder and call 911, give a good witness description and the direction the car was traveling. Tell them the car description and how many folks are inside. You don't want the driver dialing 911 at top speed and crashing their car somewhere while reporting the drunk driver. Take that next exit if that's what necessary to keep you safe."

### **Texting**

But then it's easy enough for a driver to get distracted by something other than alcohol as texting continues to be on the rise in car fatalities. "Once you see someone texting, make a decision whether you feel they're endangering themselves or others," Trooper Haschel says "Studies have shown that texting is nearly as dangerous as drinking and driving. Call it in but don't put yourself in danger by driving alongside them. A four-lane can quickly turn into them swerving right into you."

## **Respect the Rain**

Drivers need to realize that rain is more than an inconvenience—it could be a trap. Many Texans don't expect flash flooding but, Trooper Haschel says, they should. "When you don't have rain for months, you can get all of it in one afternoon," he says. "Torrential downpours on the coast of Texas, especially during Hurricane Season, can be deadly. If you think there's any chance of a flood if you keep going, turn around. It only takes a couple feet of flowing water to float a car down a river and overturn it and break windows. Find yourself getting sucked too far in then immediately get on your cell phone for help."

*Eric Butterman hasn't eaten at every restaurant at the Shops of Legacy—but he will. You can reach him at [ericbutterman@yahoo.com](mailto:ericbutterman@yahoo.com)*