

INSTEAD OF SWERVING, STOP

When Danger Jumps Into Your Path

When something jumps into the path of your vehicle, it's natural for the untrained driver to swerve. But the professional knows that swerving can be deadly. Whether the hazards suddenly appears as you turn, or if it shows up as you head straight down the

stop. Evasive action should not be an overly abrupt maneuver. Sudden swerves result in collisions, skids, jackknifing and rollovers. If the hazard ahead of you is a suddenly disabled vehicle, it may slow drastically.

But it's unlikely to stop immediately. You'll know when you see a disablement in the making—steam or smoke from the vehicle's engine or exhaust pipe, a flat or smoking tire, or sudden slowing without



highway, there's a right way and a wrong way to deal with it. The wrong way is to swerve. The right way is to stop.

Out of Nowhere

You've signaled and slowed for a turn. You're careful to take one last look in the direction of your turn. From nowhere, it seems, something has jumped into the path of your planned turn. It may be an overly wide vehicle, a bicyclist riding against traffic or someone backing out of a driveway. You might be tempted to swerve. Instead, you stop.

Aborting the turn, that is, swerving out of it, would be dangerous. A driver may be passing you on the side opposite to your turn. That vehicle may be in your blind spot, even if you glance swiftly in the mirror.

Swerving wide of the hazard is equally dangerous. If the hazard you swerve to avoid is a moving vehicle, the driver of that vehicle may also swerve. You're as likely to swerve into each other as you are to avoid each other. Swerving wide in a turn needlessly endangers pedestrians, parked cars and moving traffic. It's important to note that the situation is the same whether you swerve wide or towards the curb.

Instead of swerving, stop.

Swerves are Dangerous

If the choice is between a sudden stop and a swerve,

apparent cause. Turn on your four-way emergency flashers to warn drivers behind you that you are slowing down. If an immediate stop is required, use threshold braking.

Threshold and Stab Braking

Threshold braking gives you maximum stopping power while retaining traction for steering. Apply the brakes just short of lockup and maintain steady pressure. This is a relatively easy technique with the hydraulic braking systems used in automobiles. Air brakes are trickier and each vehicle's lock up point is different. If you've had no opportunity to practice threshold braking on the vehicle you're operating, it is better to use stab braking (also called "fanning the brakes") for a sudden stop.

Stab braking alternatively gives you maximum braking, then steering traction. Apply the brakes fully, then release them partially before the wheels have a chance to lock. Repeat the stab braking sequence until your vehicle has slowed sufficiently. Because air is exhausted into the atmosphere each time you release the brakes, fanning air brakes can reduce the brake system air pressure dangerously. If the process must be repeated, be sure the system has time to recover.