



News Release

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INVOLVED IN A CRASH? IMPORTANT NEXT STEPS FROM AAA EXPERTS

Staying calm and on task after an auto collision can save lives and get you back on the road quickly

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va., (July 25, 2012) – Being involved in an auto collision can be an emotional and exhausting experience. Many motorists drive defensively, take driver education courses and prepare for stressful driving situations, but unfortunately vehicle collisions still occur.

A driver is responsible for knowing what to do if they are involved in a collision. “Even the most prepared and competent drivers sometimes find themselves involved in a crash,” says Dr. William Van Tassel, manager, AAA Driver Training Programs. “It does not matter who is at fault, the most important thing to do first is make sure everyone is OK, then seek medical and law enforcement help and know what to do to protect yourself from legal or financial problems down the road.”

The best defense to avoid any problems after a crash is to be prepared. Keeping pen, paper, disposable camera or cell phone camera, and a copy of your insurance card easily accessible at all times will help keep you organized and decrease stress moments after a collision. Use of a mobile app such as AAA Insurance can help you properly document the event.

After stopping your vehicle, AAA recommends all motorists involved in an auto crash follow these steps:

1. **Assist the Injured.** Quickly check with those involved in the collision to determine if there are any injuries. If medical attention is needed, call 9-1-1. If medical attention is not needed, make sure you are not in imminent danger at the roadside.
2. **Control the Scene.** Before taking time to exchange information, get to a safe place. If there are no injuries and the vehicle is drivable, safely move to the right or left emergency lane. Some state laws require drivable vehicles to be removed from the roadway to avoid traffic congestion. Turn on your hazard lights and set out warning flares or reflective triangles. Do not leave the scene of the crash, but find a safe place to remain until emergency services arrive.
3. **Notify the Police and Submit a Report.** The law requires you notify the police. No matter what either party says, call the police and file a report. If the police do not come to the scene to open an investigation, you can file a report by visiting a local police department or automobile insurance agency in the days after a crash. Having a report on file may help later if a liability claim is filed.
4. **Document the Scene and Exchange Information.** It is important to exchange and gather information with all parties involved in the crash, including witnesses. Having this on file will help complete any future paperwork or address potential problems. AAA suggests that you document:
 - Names
 - Addresses/email address
 - Vehicle Information including makes, models and years for all cars involved

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- Vehicle identification/license plate numbers
 - Driver's license numbers
 - Insurance carriers and policy numbers
 - Take photos of the location, people involved and damaged vehicles
5. **Notify Your Insurance Carrier.** Your insurance carrier will need to be notified following a crash to start the proper claim filing. Many insurance companies have staff available 24/7 and can assist immediately. Having proof of insurance in your vehicle is required by law and makes filing a claim easier if not at home.
 6. **Get Your Vehicle Repaired.** You have the right to get your vehicle repaired at body shop of your own choosing. In addition to facilities suggested by your insurance company.
 7. **Unattended Vehicle or Property.** If you are involved in a crash that involves an unattended vehicle or property, take action to inform the owner. If you cannot locate the owner, attach a written notice of the collision to the vehicle or property, being sure to include your contact information and information listed above.

Drivers and owners of motor vehicles must be prepared to assume legal and financial responsibility if involved in a crash, but AAA advises not to let your emotions and feelings get in the way of deciding who is at fault. Never allow yourself to be pressured into admitting fault or giving an opinion about the cause of a crash. If you wish, you can consult with an attorney before giving a statement.

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