

Know Your Traffic Laws

Prepared in Cooperation With the Torrance Police Department

Traffic Box Score
(As of May 1)*

Fatalities	6
Injury Accidents	166
Persons Injured	253
Non-injury Accidents	214

Box score of all accident investigated by Torrance Police Department since Jan. 1, 1961

Over the past few months we have attempted to show you some of the leading causes of accidents, discussed some of the many violations associated with accidents, and pointed out what each of us can do to eliminate the useless killing and maiming of our fellow drivers each year.

It occurred to us, however, that another very important point has been overlooked and unfortunately this factor is not given nearly enough attention and thought.

I REFER to a driver's mental attitude. One could search the entire vehicle code and would be unable to find where this is covered, but it certainly has to be placed well up the list of leading causes of accidents. This factor is very difficult for every trained investigator to find and to evaluate in terms of accident cause but it has to be considered a factor.

How we feel emotionally has an effect on our driving. If we wake up in the morning and feel good this will show up in our driving. If we feel good we tend to be more courteous, tolerant, and more alert. Thus we are more safety minded and our driving shows this.

ON THE OTHER hand if we had an argument with the little woman or vice versa, we tend to be mad at the world, take out our contempt on the closest person, and in general, our whole outlook on life is bad. This affects our driving.

Many times we feel as if we didn't have a care in the world and while driving on our way to work another motorist does something that makes us mad. Immediately our temper is aroused. Suddenly the world isn't so good after all. Our whole outlook has changed in just a second or two.

STOP AND give the above some thought and be honest with yourself. If we are honest about it we must admit this happens quite often. We all have emotions and can be affected by the doings of another, and all too many times we are affected. It only shows up as another accident. Perhaps the direct cause of the accident was an unsafe lane change but indirectly the fact that you allowed yourself to become aroused caused you to act in an abnormal manner.

Because you got mad, you were not thinking clearly and

were not as alert as you could have been, and thus the accident occurs. I certainly don't say every accident is caused by a person losing his temper and becoming emotional, but I do feel that by allowing yourself to be affected by the poor driving of another can increase your chances of becoming involved in an accident.

CAN YOU imagine what would happen if each and every one of us tried our very best to drive according to the rules of the road, obeyed all traffic laws, and overlooked the other fellow's mistakes by not allowing oneself to become aroused by the other fellow's errors?

It certainly would bring back some of the pleasures of driving an automobile. Perhaps you are saying to yourself, OK, I agree 100 per cent, but what can I do or how can just a few accomplish this.

Courtesy is contagious and you, as an individual, doing your best can affect your fellow drivers. By being a little tolerant and understanding your attitude can rub off on the next driver.

HOW MANY times have you been waiting to make a left turn and because of heavy oncoming traffic had to sit out in the intersection for what seemed an eternity. Then along came a considerate motorist who slowed down and motioned you across because he was in no hurry.

This little gesture on his part made you feel pretty good, so good you waved a thank you to him. Now you feel better and at the next cross walk a pedestrian is trying to cross the street. You stop to allow the pedestrian to cross, he appreciates this and smiles or nods to you. Now there are three happy people when just a moment ago there was just the one. This can go on and on, and does every day, however these deeds go unnoticed.

IT IS NOT the intention of this writer to create the feeling that drivers are unstable and in need of being analyzed, but only to show how mental attitude can and does play a part in accidents. The case in point is for us drivers not to allow ourselves to become irritated or aroused while driving our cars but to remain calm and collected.

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