



Prevent Additional Hassles When Your Vehicle Breaks Down

You're driving, not a care in the world, when your car suddenly breaks down. No matter the cause, it's an unnerving experience, especially if it happens on a busy highway. Do you know what to do if you find yourself stranded? Read on for some general tips that can help you stay safe if your car breaks down.

Slow Down and Pull Off the Road

If you notice something is wrong with your vehicle while driving, ease your foot off the gas pedal, signal and carefully steer your vehicle toward the right shoulder. Try to pull as far away from the roadway as possible. Put the car in park, engage the emergency brake, and turn the steering wheel away from the road. That way, your car can't roll into oncoming traffic. If you're in a residential area, pull into a parking lot or gas station if one's nearby.

Be Visible

Now that you've safely exited the road, make sure you can be seen by other drivers. Turn on your emergency or hazard lights and if it's dark, turn on the interior dome light as well. Roll down the driver's side window and hang out a white cloth or piece of paper and roll the window back up to secure it in place. The cloth or paper alerts drivers that your vehicle is disabled. If you can safely do so, open the hood, a universal sign of car trouble. If you're not stuck in traffic and have road flares or safety triangles, place them behind your vehicle, but again, only if it is safe to do so. Flares or triangles are extremely effective alerting others to your predicament, particularly if it's nighttime or visibility is poor.

Call for Help

If you have a roadside assistance provider, call them. If you don't, call for a tow truck or dial 911. Calling police or first-responders as soon as possible can limit your risk; once they arrive they have resources to help ensure your safety and the safety of other motorists. Also, know your approximate location. If unsure, mention any exits, intersections or highway mile markers you have driven past. If there are any buildings or landmarks near your location, be sure to mention them as well.

Stay in Your Vehicle

It's usually best to stay in your vehicle with your seat belts on until someone help arrives. Getting out of your car can put you in danger of being hit by oncoming traffic. Sitting in an immobile vehicle with traffic all around you is unnerving, but attempting to cross a freeway or busy street on foot is extremely risky. Of course, if your engine's smoking or you see flames, get out! If you must leave your vehicle, always exit on the side away from traffic.

Wait for Help to Arrive

Avoid the temptation to try to fix your car by yourself. Play it safe and wait for emergency personnel to arrive. Even if it's only a flat tire and you know how to change it, you'd be wise to wait until a police officer arrives to help slow down traffic.

Every break down comes with its own unique set of circumstances. There is a huge difference between being stranded on a busy highway during rush hour, or in town on a residential street. Just remember to stay calm, exercise caution and always exit your car on the side away from the flow of traffic. Keeping these roadside safety tips in mind can help keep you and your passengers safe after a vehicle break down.

Visit [Allstate Be Aware and Prepare](#) and the [Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety](#) for more, helpful information.