

Guidelines to avoid road accidents

 By [Henrie Geysers](#) 14 Nov 2013

The Festive season is almost upon us and while it a time to be happy and relax with friends and family, it is sadl also the one time of the year when many South African motorists are injured or killed in car accidents, many of which could have been avoided.



Speed kills. (Image: Dawidl, via Wikimedia Commons)

To help reduce the number of accidents on the road, Tiger Wheel and Tyre have cautioned motorists to relax, take it easy and to follow some basic guidelines to ensure their safety on our busy roads.

Most important of all is to follow basic guidelines such as indicate early, drive smoothly, overtake only when it's safe to do brake early and show gratitude to other courteous drivers, while resisting the urge to run discourteous drivers off the road and "teach them manners."

Don't drive drowsy!

Don't get behind the wheel if you're drowsy. Leaving at 3am to avoid the traffic may seem like a good idea, but if you've had insufficient sleep and your passengers are dozing off instead of interacting with and helping you to stay awake, it can be the worst idea in the world.

Always maintain at least a three second gap from the car ahead. Of course a following distance is often mistaken for a gap to slot into by other drivers. If that happens, take a deep breath and fall back another three seconds. Getting annoyed won't help, but getting out the way will. If it's raining or dark outside, double the gap to six seconds.



Feeling drowsy? Pull over and take a nap... or else. (Image: La Cara Salma, via Wikimedia Commons)

There are many incompetent drivers out there but there is not much we can do about that, but you can minimise their effect on you by anticipating their next move. If someone shows a penchant for weaving in and out of traffic, fall back and let the moving missile get out of your driving space. Also, don't rely on the car ahead of you for all your driving cues. Look to see what cars further ahead are doing. If they're braking, slow down.

Instead of trying to set a land-speed record, stop every two hours to stretch your legs instead. If you're travelling with passengers and especially with small children, plan frequent stops for everyone to get some air and enjoy the scenery. It may take a little longer to get there, but when you do you'll be much more relaxed.

Before you start your journey, make sure that your car's fluids are all topped up; that your lights and windscreen wipers are working properly, all hoses and belts are intact and properly attached; and that your tyres and spare tyre are in good shape and inflated to the correct pressures.

The condition of your tyres is particularly important and assist motorists all Tiger Wheel & Tyre branches offer a free tyre safety check service countrywide.

ABOUT HENRIE GEYSER

Henrie Geyser joined the online publishing industry through iafrica.com, where he worked for five years as news editor and editor. He now freelances for a variety of print and online publications, on the subjects of cars, food, and travel, among others; and is a member of the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists. henrieg@iafrica.com
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