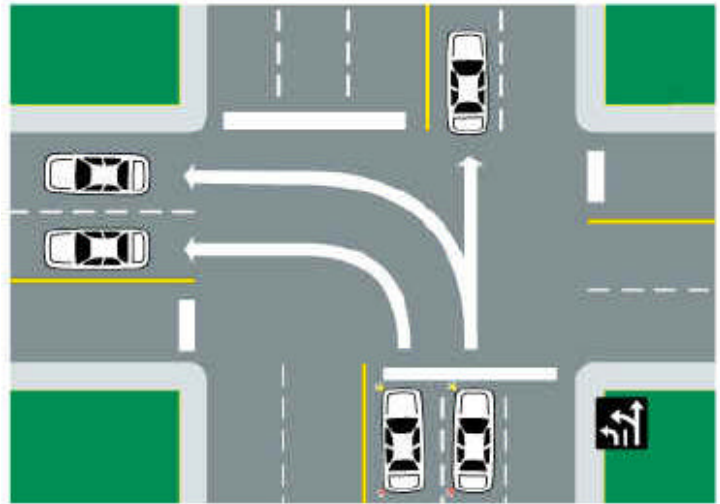


Driver Alert: Dual Turn Lanes

Two people I know have been involved in automobile collisions this summer while making a turn through a double turning lane. To me, this is an alarming number, and I felt the need to issue a heads up to my other friends who frequent Calgary streets. I don't want to hear about any more of my buddies having their cars wrecked because some other moronic driver couldn't perform a simple turn.

Here is what happens: Using the picture below as a reference, imagine what would happen if the car on the right decided to turn into the inside lane. That's right kids, a collision will result, and I know two people who have been victimized this summer by some moron doing exactly this.

When you think of it, there are actually very few options for the victim in such a collision. By the time you realize that the idiot turning beside you is taking your lane, slamming on the brakes will not save you, the position and angles of the two vehicles have already made this an impossible option. The only other feasible option is to swerve farther to the inside of the turn. If you realize what is going on soon enough, and have a very maneuverable vehicle, this just might save you, but I wouldn't count on it. Most likely, by the time you realize you need to swerve, you won't be able to turn hard enough and stop fast enough to avoid smashing right into the median in the road, or worse, another vehicle.



To avoid such collisions, I think the best option is to try and take the outside lane whenever possible. This will afford you much more room to perform evasive maneuvers and save your car. More importantly, always remember that the person turning next to you might do something stupid at any moment. The road is full of terrible drivers, and a large portion of them make mistakes on a frequent basis. Don't let yourself be a victim of someone else's stupidity.

This is all caused by a much deeper problem in our society; it is far too easy to get a drivers license and operate a vehicle. The knowledge test for a driver's license is riff-raff, anyone with an ounce of common sense can pass this test, and they don't even require a perfect score. Then they take you for a road test. This is useless, as they do not test the person on any skills that are really required for safe driving. They test them on how to park and stop for a stop sign. Why don't they test them on proper turning lines or threshold braking? Learning how to park and use a stop sign might help you park your car at the mall, but proper braking can save a life.

If it were up to me, you would see the driver certification system change dramatically. All motorists would be required to complete an extensive course covering defensive driving, performance driving, and basic vehicle functionality and maintenance. Once they complete the course, I would require that they all complete a comprehensive road test, checking to make sure they are both confident and capable of operating a vehicle. Such a program would save so many lives.

I salute those of you who are capable and confident behind the wheel, it is a pleasure to share the road with you. Watch yourselves while you're out there, and I'll watch out for you.