

Dept. of Transportation: ‘Steer It, Clear It’ law keeps drivers, first responders safe after a crash

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The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is asking drivers to take simple steps that will provide the safest conditions for everyone on the roads after a crash.

Wisconsin State Patrol’s November Law of the Month is a reminder of the state’s [“Steer It, Clear It”](#) law. The law requires drivers to move vehicles involved in a crash out of traffic if no one is hurt and the vehicles can be moved safely. If someone is hurt or the vehicle is disabled, drivers should not risk injury by trying to push the vehicle out of traffic.

This simple action, moving out of the lane of traffic, provides safer conditions for law enforcement and other responders. It also helps crews more easily clear vehicles, crash debris, spilled materials, and other obstructions from the road.

“Our officers and first responders put themselves at risk to help those who get into trouble on the highways. If you find yourself in a crash, help us keep everyone safe and move out of the path of traffic,” Superintendent Anthony Burrell said.

Across Wisconsin, there were 115,694 crashes in 2020. 703 were secondary crashes, happening after an initial incident. Secondary crashes put those involved and the responders who show up to help in danger. Last year, 69 workers were hurt and two were killed while responding to an emergency in Wisconsin.

This month, WisDOT is also marking Crash Responder Safety Week from November 8-14, 2021. The initiative highlights the crucial role of first responders and the importance of protecting them on the roads by moving over and slowing down to

keep them safe while they work. More information on [Wisconsin's Move Over law](#) is available here.

Drivers involved in a crash should do the following:

1. Check for injuries. Call 911 if anyone is hurt. Provide accurate information about the location of the incident, severity of injuries, and number of lanes blocked.
2. Stay safe and calm. Watch for traffic, stay inside the vehicle with a seat belt on while waiting for help.
3. If you can steer it, clear it. Move out of traffic if the vehicle is not disabled.
4. Turn hazard lights on or raise the hood of the vehicle to warn other drivers of the incident and avoid secondary crashes.

“Steer It, Clear It” became law in Wisconsin in 1998 and grants immunity from civil damages to anyone who clears the crash scene at the direction of law enforcement.

Drivers should also be aware of what to do when an emergency vehicle approaches on the roads. State law requires drivers to yield the right of way and pull over when an authorized emergency vehicle has its lights or sirens activated. Stay parallel to the right curb or right edge of the shoulder, clear of any intersection, until the emergency crews pass through the area.