

## **A Guide to Determining Preventability of Accidents**

The heart of accident analysis is the determination of preventability, based on the facts furnished in the motor carrier's recordable accident register, and from various other sources. These sources of information must be evaluated in light of all available facts that are pertinent to the cause of the accident. Digging out these facts from the information on these reports can be difficult in practice due to the limited data contained in some reports. But the information can be obtained in many instances by a detailed analysis and reconstruction of the accident sequence.

Each accident must be judged individually. Certain types will generally fall in the non-preventable category, and certain others, in the absence of extenuating circumstances and conditions, fall in the preventable category. The types of accidents listed below do not cover every accident that may occur, but they are intended to provide general guidance to assist in determining preventability.

### **Non-Preventable Accidents** **Struck in Rear by Other Vehicle**

#### **Non-preventable if** **Driver's vehicle was legally and properly parked**

- Driver was proceeding in his/her own lane of traffic at a safe and lawful speed
- Driver was stopped in traffic due to existing conditions or was stopped in compliance with traffic sign or signal or the directions of a police officer or other person legitimately controlling traffic
- Driver was in proper lane waiting to make turn.

#### **Struck While Parked**

#### **Non-preventable if** **Driver was properly parked in a location where parking was permitted**

- Vehicle was stopped, parked, or left standing in accordance with Sections 392.21 and 392.22 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

## Preventable Accidents Accidents at Intersections

Preventable if  
Driver failed to control speed so that he/she could stop within available sight distance

- Driver failed to check cross-traffic and wait for it to clear before entering intersection
- Driver pulled out from side street in the face of oncoming traffic
- Driver collided with person, vehicle, or object while making right or left turn
- Driver collided with vehicle making turn in front of him/her.

## Striking Other Vehicle in Rear

Preventable if  
Driver failed to maintain safe following distance and have his/her vehicle under control

- Driver failed to keep track of traffic conditions and did not slow down
- Driver failed to ascertain whether vehicle ahead was moving slowly, stopped, or slowing down for any reason
- Driver misjudged rate of overtaking
- Driver came too close before pulling out to pass
- Driver failed to wait for vehicle ahead to move into the clear before starting up
- Driver failed to leave sufficient room for passing vehicle to get safely back in line.

## Sideswipe and Head-on Collisions

Preventable if  
Driver was not entirely in his/her proper lane of travel

- Driver did not pull to right and slow down or stop for vehicle encroaching on his/her lane of travel when such action could have been taken without additional danger.

## Struck in Rear by Other Vehicle

### Preventable if

Driver was passing slower traffic near an intersection and had to make sudden stop

- Driver made sudden stop to park, load, or unload
- Vehicle was improperly parked
- Driver rolled back into vehicle behind them while starting on grade

## Squeeze Plays and Shutouts

### Preventable if

Driver failed to yield right-of-way when necessary to avoid accident

## Backing Accidents

### Preventable if

Driver backed up when backing could have been avoided by better planning of his/her route

- Driver backed into traffic stream when such backing could have been avoided
- Driver failed to get out of cab and check proposed path of backward travel
- Driver depended solely on mirrors when it was practicable to look back
- Driver failed to get out of cab periodically and recheck conditions when backing a long distance
- Driver failed to check behind vehicle parked at curb before attempting to leave parking space
- Driver relied solely on a guide to help him/her back
- Driver backed from blind side when he/she could have made a sight-side approach. ">

## Accident Involving Rail Operated Vehicles

### Preventable if

Driver attempted to cross tracks directly ahead of train or streetcar

- Driver ran into side of train or streetcar
- Driver stopped or parked on or too close to tracks.

## Accidents While Passing

### Preventable if

Driver passed where view of road ahead was obstructed by hill, curve, vegetation, traffic, adverse weather conditions, etc.

- Driver attempted to pass in the face of closely approaching traffic
- Driver failed to warn driver of vehicle being passed
- Driver failed to signal change of lanes
- Driver pulled out in front of other traffic overtaking from rear
- Driver cut in too short while returning to right lane.

## Accidents While Being Passed

### Preventable if

Driver failed to stay in his own lane and hold speed or reduce it to permit safe passing.

## Accidents While Entering Traffic Stream

### Preventable if

Driver failed to signal when pulling out from curb

- Driver failed to check traffic before pulling out from curb
- Driver failed to look back to check traffic if he/she was in position where mirrors did not show traffic conditions
- Driver attempted to pull out in a manner that forced other vehicle(s) to change speed or direction
- Driver failed to make full stop before entering from side street, alley, or driveway
- Driver failed to make full stop before crossing sidewalk
- Driver failed to yield right of way to approaching traffic.

## Pedestrian Accidents

### Preventable if

Driver did not reduce speed in area of heavy pedestrian traffic

- Driver was not prepared to stop
- Driver failed to yield right of way to pedestrian.

## Mechanical Defects Accidents

### Preventable if

Defect was of a type that driver should have detected in making pre-trip or enroute inspection of vehicle

- Defect was of a type that driver should have detected during the normal operation of the vehicle
- Defect was caused by driver's abusive handling of the vehicle
- Defect was known to driver, but ignored
- Driver was instructed to operate with known defect.

## All Types of Accidents

### Preventable if

Driver was not operating at a speed suitable for the existing conditions of road, weather, and traffic

- Driver failed to control speed so that he/she could stop within assured clear distance
- Driver misjudged available clearance
- Driver failed to yield right-of-way to avoid accident
- Driver failed to accurately observe existing conditions
- Driver was in violation of company operating rules or special instructions, the regulations of any Federal or State regulatory agency, or any applicable traffic laws or ordinances.