

## Parking Lot Safety

Many of us use parking lots daily, taking safety in these areas for granted. We often believe because we are traveling at such low speeds, accidents are unlikely to occur. But when motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic must mix, parking lots become very dangerous and vulnerable places for both pedestrians and drivers alike. Safety measures are regularly overlooked, leaving other drivers and pedestrians at a high risk for being injured by a moving vehicle.

### Drivers

Because drivers are least concentrated on driving and more focused on finding a parking space, a parking lot is one of the likeliest places for fender benders to occur. Vehicle operators need to remember that the restricted lanes and spaces in a parking lot allow no room for evasive action if speed is too high for instant stopping when impact is imminent.

When driving in a parking lot, be careful backing up; you may even want to sound your horn when backing up. Do not rely entirely on your vehicle's mirrors when driving through tight areas; there are too many blind spots. Avoid cutting across a parking lot through empty parking spaces and lanes. You should always travel in the correct direction down lanes, be cautious of blind corners, observe crosswalk markings, and never park in a Fire Lane. It is recommended that you drive no faster than 5 mph to 10 mph in a parking lot, unless otherwise posted. And always take the time to watch out for pedestrians walking across the lot.



According to a report published by the U.S. Department of Transportation, during a recent year:

- 9,650,000 vehicles were involved in a single or two-vehicle accident.
- Of these accidents, almost 300,000 were attributed to vehicle maneuvers commonly found in parking lots:
  - 27,000 accidents occurred while entering a parking space.
  - 198,000 were caused while backing up.
  - 65,000 were caused while leaving a parking space.

*When we share the responsibility for safety in the workplace, everyone wins!!*

## **Pedestrians**

It is hard to tell whether careless drivers or heedless pedestrians are the worst offenders in parking lot accidents, but we know that the combination can provide plenty of headaches. Very slow driving and constant alertness is imperative wherever pedestrians are walking.

The parking lot is the most common transition point for a switch in personalities. The driver becomes a pedestrian, and vice versa. When a driver parks their vehicle and becomes a pedestrian, some people seem to forget that they are no longer behind the wheel. After parking, they rush through the parking lot traffic as if to make up time for being late.



Pedestrians should always be cautious of these hazards:

- Moving vehicles; and never assume that the driver sees you.
- Potholes that can cause you to trip.
- Cracks in the asphalt that you can trip on, or get a heel caught in.
- Parking lot striping that can be slippery.
- Litter such as bottles and cans, which can be potential slip/trip/fall hazards.
- Speed bumps that you can trip over.
- Standing water, and in winter month icy surfaces.
- Oil and other liquids that have leaking from vehicles.

Other parking lot safety tips:

- Always walk, do not run.
- Be observant and watch your step.
- Never dart in and out of traffic.
- Do not stop to talk in the middle of a parking lot.
- Always walk directly to the safety of the sidewalk.
- Utilize situational awareness and know your surroundings at all times.