

May 2022

A Safer Naper --- Traffic Safety

In 2021, the Naperville Police Department responded to 2,408 roadway traffic crashes throughout the City. The primary causes of these crashes involved speed (such as failure to reduce speed or driving too fast for conditions) and failure to yield the right of way.

Knowing the primary causes of crashes helps police direct education and enforcement to curb these behaviors. This month's Safer Naper campaign is dedicated to educating motorists on how their behavior behind the wheel can contribute to making our roadways safer.

COMMON CAUSES OF CRASHES

Speed

A driver's speed is the primary contributing factor in approximately 37% of roadway crashes in the City of Naperville, making it the most common contributing factor in crashes in the city. A driver's excessive speed, or inability to reduce their speed before a collision, is a hazard for all who travel on our roadways. Couple this with increased distracted driving, and the outcome can be tragic. Studies have shown that the risk of serious injury or death in a 40-mph crash is well under 5%. However, at 50 mph, that risk increases to just over 50%.

It is important to remember that speed limits are set with safety in mind based on factors like traffic volume, roadway features like curves or hills, sight distances, presence of on-street parking, pedestrian or bicyclist activity, and crash history, among other criteria. Also remember that regardless of the posted speed limit, weather and traffic conditions may make it necessary to drive more slowly.

To increase your chances of arriving at your destination safely you should consider the following:

- Travel the posted speed limit. You may not be cognizant of all the factors contributing to a particular road's speed limit. Trust the engineers who determined what speed is safe for the type of roadway you are traveling.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Check your mirrors and scan ahead.
- Scan oncoming traffic as vehicles traveling in the opposite direction can pose a serious hazard.
- Travel in the right lane when possible. Unless passing, the bulk of your travel should NOT be in the left most lane.
- Increase your following distance. At 40 mph, the *Rules of the Road* suggest 3 seconds, or approximately 180 feet, of distance between you and the car ahead of you.

Failure to Yield the Right of Way

Right of way violations can be particularly dangerous as they tend to involve angled traffic crashes. The most common right of way violation seen in Naperville is Failure to Yield Turning Left, which most often arises at intersections controlled by traffic signals. Vehicles illegally turning left on a solid green or yellow can cause serious crashes.

The following are recommendations to allow for proper yielding to vehicles that have the right of way:

- Do not assume oncoming traffic is going to stop for the yellow or red light. Watch the oncoming vehicles slow/stop before completing your turn.
- If you are approaching an intersection and the signal turns to yellow, slow and stop if possible. Do not increase your speed to make it through the intersection.

IMPORTANCE OF PROPER RESTRAINTS

Illinois law requires all drivers and passengers (front and back seat) age 8 and older to wear safety belts. Passengers under age 8 must be secured in an appropriate child restraint system as covered by the Child Passenger Protection Act. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure ALL passengers obey the safety belt law and the Child Passenger Protection Act.

Seat Belts Save Lives

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 47% of passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2019 were unrestrained.

Studies show the benefits of buckling up are clear:

1. If you buckle up in the front seat of a passenger car, you can reduce your risk of:
 - Fatal injury by 45% (Kahane, 2015)
 - Moderate to critical injury by 50%
2. If you buckle up in a light truck, you can reduce your risk of:
 - Fatal injury by 60% (Kahane, 2015)
 - Moderate to critical injury by 65% (NHTSA, 1984)

The good news is that surveys conducted in Naperville in 2021 showed a seatbelt usage rate of 91%. A recent survey showed that rate of usage increased to almost 94%.

Child Safety Seat Inspections

Motor vehicles crashes are the leading cause of accidental injury-related death among children ages 14 and under. Child safety seats, when used and installed correctly, can prevent injury and often death. However, misuse of child safety seats is widespread. It is estimated that nearly 4 out of 5 children who are placed in child safety seats are improperly restrained.

The Naperville Police Department is committed to child safety and has certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPST) on staff to provide child safety seat inspections and education to residents to ultimately reduce the number of injuries and/or fatalities related to traffic collisions.

The CPS technician conducts an inspection of child safety seats, ensures proper installation and instructs parents/caregivers on the proper use and installation of their child's safety seat. Our CPS technicians will ensure parents/caregivers are confident installing their child safety seat(s) and are comfortable reinstalling and using it correctly.

[Request an Inspection](#)