



If You Witness a Collision

If you are the first person on the scene after a collision, your quick action could save lives. And your description of the accident is important for police records. Here's the course of action recommended in many states:

Stop and Help

If you are the first person at the scene of a collision, pull completely off the road beyond the collision. Turn on your emergency lights, and place reflective triangles or other warning devices 200 to 300 feet behind the collision to warn other motorists. Do not use flares if there is a chance of spilled gasoline nearby. Do not smoke near the collision.

Find Out If There Are Injuries

Turn off the ignition of all vehicles involved. Check to see if anyone is injured. Do not move injured people unless their safety demands it. Moving can make injuries worse. If you are trained in first aid, rescue breathing or CPR, use these techniques if needed.

Inform the Police

Ask the next person who stops to notify the police. They should be prepared to give this information:

- Location of the collision, including cross streets, freeway entrance/exit information, and the number of the phone being used.
- What injuries need attention—is anyone bleeding, unconscious, without a pulse? Is first aid being given?
- Don't hang up until the emergency dispatcher hangs up.

Wait for the Police

Remain at the scene of the accident until the police arrive and you can tell them what happened. Meanwhile move the vehicle involved out of traffic if it is not disabled. Search the area for victims thrown from the vehicle. They could be hidden in grass or bushes.

If you see an accident where emergency help is already present, keep moving unless police or emergency responders at the scene direct you to stop. Stopping or slowing down to view an accident can result in another collision.



Basic First Aid

- If victim is not breathing do rescue breathing.
- If there is no pulse, start CPR, if trained to do so.
- To stop bleeding, cover the wound with a compress, handkerchief or other piece of clean clothing. Press hard and elevate the wound above the heart unless this movement causes the victim pain.
- Don't move an injured person unless you are absolutely sure there is no spinal injury.
- Treat shock by keeping the victim lying down and warm. Shock victims have pale or bluish skin cold to the touch. They may feel weak and disoriented and have a rapid pulse.

Contact the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross for classes in first aid and CPR.

