

## Could This Collision Have Been Prevented?

### Southbound Smashup

Hal was driving south on the interstate on a scorchingly hot afternoon. How he wished he'd shelled out the extra dough for air conditioning. If only there was a little shade! Suddenly, as he was passing a moving van in the lane to his right, a shadow loomed up, easing the heat and the blinding sun. "Hey!" thought Hal, "If I stay right next to this van, I can keep out of the sun." For several miles Hal happily traveled in the shadow of the van. There were only two southbound lanes on this interstate, but it didn't bother him at all that traffic was piling up behind him in what was supposed to be the passing lane.

Hal's happiness changed to catastrophe in the blink of an eye, when the moving van veered into his lane, shoving him into the divider and demolishing the left side of his car. As the two vehicles skidded to a stop, the van was rear-ended by the car behind it. The driver of the van had attempted to pass a slow car in front of the van, and had no idea the left lane wasn't clear. Hal was driving in his blind spot.



1. What, if anything, could Hal have done to prevent this collision? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What did the van driver forget to do before beginning the pass? \_\_\_\_\_

3. The driver of the car behind Hal broke a basic safe driving rule. What is the rule? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Courtesy on the road is a basic rule of defensive driving. How did Hal break this rule? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Answers:

1. First, Hal should not have been driving continuously in the passing lane. And he should not have been driving in the van driver's blind spot. Defensive drivers know that this is an unsafe place to be and either stay out of it or move quickly through it. It is never wise to put personal comfort over safety.
2. The van driver forgot to look over his shoulder before passing. No matter how good your mirrors are, it's always best to take a direct look, especially if you're driving a large vehicle.
3. The driver of the car behind Hal broke the Three-Second Plus Rule for following distance at speeds above 40 miles per hour. In her impatience with Hal's slow driving in the fast lane, she had moved too close to Hal to be able to avoid a collision after his sudden stop.
4. By driving in the passing lane, Hal obstructed the flow of traffic and put his own comfort ahead of the needs of other drivers.