
Motor vehicle crashes

Summary

- Stop if you are involved in an accident.
 - Check to see if anyone is injured, and help them if you can.
 - Contact emergency services (if necessary).
 - Stand away from the vehicles if the area is unsafe or if there is a fire.
 - Swap details with the other driver.
 - Contact your insurance provider.
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Motor vehicle crashes continue to be one of the biggest killers and causes of injury in Victoria. Over the last five years, an average of 263 lives per year were lost on Victorian roads annually. In addition to this, approximately 5,000 people each year are affected by serious injury and the mental trauma from being involved in a motor vehicle crash. Many more crashes occur each day that involve minor injuries or damage to property. It is important to know what to do if you are involved in or witness a crash. Having a plan in place before hand can help you think clearly if the time comes.

What to do if you are in a motor vehicle crash

Victorian drivers have legal responsibilities when they are involved in an accident. These are outlined in Section 61 of the Road Safety Act 1986 – Duty of driver etc. of motor vehicle if accident occurs.

If you are the driver of a motor vehicle that is involved in a crash where a person or animal is injured or property is damaged, you must:

- immediately stop the motor vehicle
- check if anyone is injured and do what you can to help – such as:
 - making the area safe
 - activating the hazard lights on the vehicle (if they are working)
 - calling 000 for an ambulance or the police
 - providing first aid – completing a first aid course will give you essential skills to help someone who is injured in a crash
- give your name and address (and those of the owner of the motor vehicle if you are not the owner) and the identifying number of the motor vehicle as soon as possible to any person (or representative of the person) who has been injured, or to the owner of any property that has been damaged or destroyed as a result of the accident
- give this information to any police officer who has attended the accident
- if no police officer attends the scene, report the crash at the nearest open police station if a person has been injured
- if no police officer attends the scene, report the crash to the nearest open police station when property has been damaged and neither the owner nor any person representing the owner is present.

For the legal responsibilities of drivers in other Australian states, please check with your road or traffic authority.

What do to if someone is injured in a motor vehicle crash

If you or somebody else is seriously injured as a result of a crash or if you're uncertain about the extent of an injury, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.

Motor vehicle crashes can cause a wide range of injuries that may not be immediately visible. It is therefore

always wise to be checked over by a health professional rather than assuming there are no injuries.

If someone you know has been in a crash and their condition deteriorates call 000 or seek urgent medical advice.

Injuries following a crash may include:

- **brain and head injuries** – these are common in crashes because the head hits parts of the vehicle interior or can be hit by a loose object. Brain injuries can be mild, moderate or severe, depending on the degree of bruising, bleeding or swelling. Even when there is no external sign of head injury, the brain can be damaged by being jarred inside the skull
- **neck injuries** – whiplash and neck strain are common injuries, even in low speed crashes
- **spinal cord injuries** – can result in permanent full or partial disability. If you suspect anyone involved in a crash could have a spinal cord injury do not move the person. Seek medical help immediately
- **back injuries** – can often cause long-term pain and movement limitations, and symptoms can show up long after the crash
- **internal injuries and internal bleeding** – can be life threatening, and should be treated straight away. Internal bleeding may not be immediately obvious, or may seem like something else. Do not ignore symptoms, even if you don't think they could be caused by internal bleeding
- **psychological injuries** such as emotional distress, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression can occur as a result of the crash or through witnessing a crash.

Arranging a tow truck

If you are unable to safely drive your vehicle away from a crash, you will need to arrange a tow truck. Accident towing is regulated in Victoria. **[VicRoads has more information about organising a tow truck following a crash.](#)**

First aid kits

Carrying a first aid kit in your vehicle is worthwhile, whether for treating everyday minor injuries or in the event of a crash. Better Health Channel has information on **[first aid kits.](#)**

First aid training and kits are also available from **[St John Ambulance Association](#)**, **[Australian Red Cross](#)** and the **[National Safety Council of Australia.](#)**

Where to get help

- Call 000 in an emergency
- If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment you can make emergency calls via the **[National Relay Service.](#)**
- For first aid training and kits, contact:
 - **[St John Ambulance Association](#)**
 - **[Australian Red Cross](#)**
 - **[National Safety Council of Australia.](#)**

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