

## 7 Tips for Avoiding Hit-And-Run Accidents: Tragedy Unveiled

by Tony M Jackson

"Today's highways and roadways are increasingly becoming more dangerous for motorists and pedestrians."

Even as the death and injury tolls continue to rise from hit-and-run motorists, survivors are left with life altering feelings of deep and perpetual loss that can never be fully recovered from the devastating fact that their lives will never be the same. Susan Nichols (name changed to protect her privacy) enjoyed taking her children Jane 5 and Timothy 3 for Sunday afternoon drives to the park, and this afternoon was not any different from the many trips she has taken in times past---nothing seemed out of the ordinary.

She was always conscientious about safety, making sure that the kids were buckled in the rear, and maintaining her vehicle at optimum service levels. "I was fanatical about safety precautions, defensive driving, and always careful to avoid potential accidents, especially when the kids were with me," says Susan. However, this day would be different for Susan and one in which she plays and replays in her mind day after day. "If only I had..." Susan begins to cry

uncontrollably, and as she composed herself, she says, "I only wish that I could have done more to protect Jane and Tim."

This is Susan, Jane, and Tim's story of a life-changing event. When entering an expressway to their destination, Susan experienced a flat tire, and after gaining control of the vehicle, she pulled over around a curve on the on-ramp---not realizing that her vehicle was out of the view of oncoming traffic. She checked to ensure that the kids were OK, turned on her emergency flashers, and began making a call for emergency assistance.

"I remember hearing the sound of screeching tires, and suddenly it happened...a truck slammed into us," says Susan. Unfortunately, little Jane and Timothy were killed instantly and Susan was severely injured and now has to live the rest of her life in a wheel chair after recovering from injuries in a hospital bed for over six months---and another year in rehabilitation. The amazing thing is, the driver of the truck kept going, and has never been brought to justice. "If only I had been more prepared, Jane and Tim could be alive today, instead I had to bury my babies,---I never thought this would happen to us, it's unbearable," said Susan.

Regrettably, Susan's story is becoming all too common. Today's highways and roadways are increasingly becoming more dangerous for motorists and pedestrians that experience vehicle inoperability or stopped on the side of the highway for any reason. Unfortunately, motorists are faced with a multitude of distractions that could lead to deadly accidents and injuries that are completely avoidable if appropriate steps are taken to decrease the likelihood of an incident occurring.

Hit-and-Run accidents, sometimes referred to as leaving the scene of an accident, hit-skip, and failure to render aid, have caused countless grief for families of victims involved in an incident. In fact, it is unimaginable that human beings would leave another person or persons to die of injuries sustained by careless disregard and distractions that lead to a deadly accident. With increases in speed limits, road rage, poor lighting conditions, cell phone use while driving, and a host of other distractions, not to mention the increased volume of vehicles on roadways, deadly hit-and-run accidents are occurring at alarming rates.

According to [deadlyroads.com](http://deadlyroads.com), "approximately 953 people have been killed so far this year by hit and run drivers in the US alone, and 64,891 people have been injured." Safety is something we have become so used to hearing about, even as toddlers throughout adult years that one lapse in safety consciousness, could lead to devastating consequences---creating victims of lives that will never be the same. You see, we have become so immune to hearing the word safety that we inherently believe we are safe, especially on highways, without taking the necessary precautions through assurances, that you or love ones are safe at all times with an understanding that incidences could and do occur.

It is a fact that flesh and blood cannot compete or win against 5 to 10 tons of steel if an impact takes place. Could Susan have done more to protect herself, Jane, and Timothy from this catastrophic event? What if the hit-and-run driver of the truck could have seen the vehicle or an external safety device, and reacted in time to avoid the accident? Motorist traveling 60/mph has (3) seconds to spot a disabled vehicle or person(s) on the roadside, and avoid an accident or collision.

Here are some simple tips to improve your chances and actually live through the experience if involved in a situation where your vehicle becomes inoperable on dangerous highways and roadways:

- 1) **Become more vehicle safety conscious, especially when stopped on highways and roadways.** The first thing you should do, is become aware of your surroundings, is your vehicle in the safest place (far off the “right” shoulder of the highway and always avoid stopping on the left side “fast lane” where chances of an incident increases by 80%)? What are the lighting effects and lighting conditions, are you stopped around a curve, and are you clearly out of the path of oncoming traffic? These are simply questions that should immediately come to mind.
- 2) **Develop a personal safety plan directed at “steps to take if I am stopped on the highway or roadside.”** There is no substitute for preparedness. Establishing a safety plan in advance will immediately enhance your chances of avoiding a deadly hit-and-run or rear-end collision. As with a fire drill, practice your plan at least twice annually (in your driveway, and not actually on the highway). If possible, “never” stop on the side of highways and roadways unless it is an absolute necessity, and even then, stopping at the next exit in a safer environment is more preferable.
- 3) **Be proactive, not reactive.** Since you cannot effectively plan for the many different kinds of incidences that could occur while on roadsides or if involved in a minor fender-bender with another vehicle---safety should be your first concern. Taking necessary precautions proactively will increase the likelihood of survival. At best, being proactive reduce the potential of deadly accidents and even post accidents if already involved in an incident requiring you to stop on the highway. In addition, put yourself in the place of oncoming motorists, and ensure that you have the best chance of higher visibility (being seen), “before” a potential incident occurs.
- 4) **Ensure that maintenance records are up-to-date and potential problems with your vehicle’s running condition is well maintained.** With the exception of a stalled engine or functional problems with your vehicle’s engine, tires are the single most vulnerable to objects in the road, or simply placing you in a situation where the vehicle becomes inoperable---creating an opportunity for hit-and-run occurrences. Always maintain tire inflation recommendations and check your tires periodically (at least once weekly) for signs of wear and tear, cuts, or abrasions that could lead to the tire failing while driving on highways/roadways.
- 5) **Emergency Roadside Services are important and provides a better opportunity for a higher visibility presence during vehicle inoperability.** Nearly all car insurance agencies have emergency roadside assistance programs free or simply added to premiums for a nominal charge for the service. Although waiting for assistance in major metropolitan areas (in some instances up to an hour) is typical, and could be longer during rush hour traffic, it is preferable to wait for assistance. Avoid opportunities to work on your vehicle in high or low traffic environments or where oncoming motorist may not see you in time to avoid an incident. If you have not already considered an emergency service program, check with your car insurance agency for their offerings or other motor club memberships.
- 6) **It is a mistake to view safety as a non-issue or passively by thinking or believing, “it will never happen to me.”** This type of thinking could lead to grave consequences. Safety awareness and preparedness are corner stones to living through a potentially devastating life-altering event and a foolish approach to dying or sustaining injuries. By understanding that it could happen to you or love ones, as well as taking proactive measures to reduce the potential of a hit-and-run and/or general roadside accident, you will have the knowledge to execute a plan that could save your life and the lives of love ones. Take safety seriously.
- 7) **Most important, higher visibility safety products are key to “early warning protection” for oncoming traffic/motorists, and the most effective way to reduce accidents or post accidents from occurring.** Since your personal vehicle is not regulated to require safety devices in times of need, and because motorists do not think in terms of accident prevention, external safety devices are front-line defenses for survival. Using safety devices that are highly visibility, portable (placed at a comfortable distance from your vehicle, and even around curves), detachable light source (used as a handheld signal or flashlight), and yes, wearing safety vests offers the best chance of incident avoidance. The safety technology works well especially at night, dawn, or dusk when nearly 62% of the incidences occur. If you do not have external “higher visibility” safety devices, you should really consider them as added protection from a potential hit-and-run occurrence. Relying on emergency flashers in tandem with external safety devices has proven more effective as well as serves as a back up if flashers become inoperable due to vehicle power failure.

While the above tips are just a few tips that would assist in reducing hit-and-run and general roadside incidences, they are not meant to be an exhaustive list to address this serious, yet in many instances, avoidable tragedy for motorists and pedestrians. Death or injuries sustained from such tragedies will always leave an indelible imprint in those left behind to endure and live the devastating events over, and over again. This problem is real and getting deadlier annually.

Our hearts and prayers go out to those families that have suffered such a terrible experience. The impact of grief caused by these events leave a void in your very soul. In the cases where the hit-and-run driver is never brought to justice, the pain is increased many times over. We all need closer in certain areas of our lives---just continue to pray.

Prevention or at best, proactive responses are important steps that reduce the chance of hit-and-run occurrences, and serve to increase safety measures that could save lives on dangerous highways and roadways. Use these tips to your advantage, and love the life and/or lives you'll save.

About the Author:

\*\*\*Tony Jackson is an expert on "loss prevention" strategies and tactical safety solutions located in West Palm Beach, Florida USA. While the Susan story is a dramatization, for real and additional hit-and-run information and memorials to victims of this tragic occurrence, visit [www.techlevel33.com](http://www.techlevel33.com) . You may also contact Tony directly at [triflector@gmail.com](mailto:triflector@gmail.com) .

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