

## INFORMATION YOU SHOULD KNOW

## PARKING LOT COLLISIONS

Accidents can be hard to avoid. Parking lot collisions may be particularly difficult to avoid due to their tight design to fit a maximum number of cars in a small space. There are also multiple distractions in parking lots. The most common distractions include technology (e.g., talking on cell phones, texting, video calls, or checking email messages). According to the [National Safety Council, 66% of drivers](#) nationwide said they were distracted by making phone calls in parking lots. Distractions can also occur when searching for a parking spot, looking for a business, and being unaware of pedestrians crossing – sometimes between parked cars.

### STATISTICS

- [CBS News](#) reports more than 50,000 crashes occur in parking lots every year
- The most common parking lot accidents include:
  - Two drivers backing into each other
  - A driver pulling out of the parking space in front of another vehicle
  - Pedestrian accidents
  - Two cars crashing trying to get into same parking spot
- Most parking lot collisions happen during the day, even when visibility is at its highest. (More people are active during the day rather than during the evening or night when visibility is at the lowest.)
- During the holiday seasons, 68% of drivers are worried about accidents due to overcrowding.

However, parking lot collisions are avoidable.

### PARKING LOT SAFETY TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES

- **Slow down and anticipate the actions of other drivers**
  - Parking lots have hazards and distractions, but other drivers tend to be the biggest hazard. When backing up and turning corners it is important to be especially cautious. Slowing down will give a person time to react and avoid a collision.
- **Keep pedestrians in mind**
  - Pedestrians may not be looking, and it is still the driver's responsibility to look around. There are pedestrians that do not always obey crosswalks which may cause more issues. Drivers must be alert for pedestrians that are darting in and out of their vehicles. If a person is driving in an active area, it is important to slow down and keep an eye out for pedestrians walking, especially in a crowded shopping lot. Going to shopping malls at peak times can create more traffic causing accidents.
- **Distance yourself**
  - Give yourself space to prevent any door dings and scratches; this can also give a better view of what is around you.
- **Fix mirrors/Backup cameras**
  - This can help to see broader areas of your surroundings and help with any possible blind spots when backing out of a parking space. The use of backup cameras can also assist with backing out around parking posts.
- **Educate drivers about parking lot hazards**
  - An awareness of the potential hazards can help avoid expensive collisions. Sharing driver safety tips such as the importance of being alert, checking for pedestrians and children, and the need to be cautious at stop signs, can provide important reminders about the potential hazards parking lots can create.
- **Avoid shopping at peak hours**
  - The busiest shopping times are Saturday and Sunday. The best time to shop is early in the day, and you may also get a better parking spot.

## AFTER A PARKING LOT COLLISION

- Never leave the scene of the accident as this may be considered a hit and run
- Track down the car owner(s) if possible
- Call the police as they can document the accident
- Call the appropriate contact at your organization to inform them of the collision and follow established protocols.

## COST

- **Direct Costs:** Direct costs or damages are the expenses incurred from, and linked to, a motor vehicle accident.
  - When a collision occurs, it can be costly for the person involved and the organization. Expenses can include:
    - The cost to repair the other vehicle or object
    - Cost to repair a company vehicle
    - Cost of rental car
  - There are notable important concerns: if a driver hits a gas pump or transformer, direct costs can easily be in the tens of thousands of dollars.

The direct costs of parking lot crashes are easy to see, but do not tell the whole story.

- **Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs are the real expenses associated with accidents. It may be difficult to assess these expenses for individual cases. Indirect crash costs are hidden beneath the waterline and can often be significant.
  - Indirect cost examples in parking lot collisions include:
    - Injuries, medical bills, and lawsuits: A collision that happens at a speed of at least two miles per hour could cost over thousands of dollars over the coming months.
    - Delays in services offered: Scheduled services and drivers may be delayed due to the collision, and this can impact typical programming and overall customer service.
    - Extra operating cost: Extra resources may be needed to offset any delays. Fuel, mileage, and loss of products are rarely counted, but add up.
    - Termination and onboarding: Depending on the details, the accident may result in termination and a huge investment of time and money for employee replacement.
    - DOT Reportable crashes: Those who have Department of Transportation (DOT) regulated fleets, need to be aware that parking lot incidents involving entry and exit have the potential to be classified as a “reportable collision.”

## PARKING LOT MAINTENANCE

Maintaining the parking lot can help prevent accidents. Proper maintenance can extend the lifespan of the pavement. Maintaining parking lots may also help prevent pedestrian accidents. Pedestrians are more at risk in parking lots where there has been little or no upkeep of paving, painting, and sweeping. Poor parking lot maintenance can result in vehicle damage due to debris and cracks but can also cause pedestrians to trip and fall. An upkeep of maintenance, such as crack filling, stripping, and repaving, will allow people to feel safe in a parking lot and can help reduce accidents.

- Maintaining a parking lot can include the following:
  - **Sweeping and cleaning:** Prevents debris and reveals areas that need repairing
  - **Sealing:** Treating the asphalt with sealant every couple of years can preserve the resilience of pavement and prevent weathering
  - **Stripping:** Marks painted on the lot must be repainted every so often to remain clear and visible. This is important for crosswalks and specially marked parking areas also.
  - **Crack filling:** Potholes and cracks allow water or debris to penetrate the surface layer which will cause further damage
  - **Asphalt overlay:** Stripping the top layer of pavement and replacing it with a new layer of asphalt helps extend the life of the pavement while giving the lot a “like new” appearance
  - **Repaving:** Once a parking lot begins to crumble, repaving and reconstructing it is typically the only course. Ideally, this is only necessary once every few decades.
- Poor surfaces in a parking lot can be due to:
  - Ice or snow accumulation
  - Broken concrete/potholes
  - Poor lighting
  - Nonfunctional sidewalks
  - No reflective materials

Parking lot collisions occur with inadequate maintenance and also due to driver distraction. Knowing the different resources that keep parking lots safe will benefit everyone - from car passengers to pedestrians. Learning and promoting safety rules and attention to parking lot upkeep at your organization can help prevent collisions from occurring in the future.



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