

What to do in a motor vehicle accident? Stay calm!

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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Getting involved in a motor vehicle accident is a daunting and unpleasant experience. It can really be upsetting, depending on the severity of the accident. The mere word 'accident' conjures up a scenario that involves two or maybe more parties.

South Africans are currently concluding the summer holidays and returning to work and with that comes lots of travel nationally and cross-border. With more vehicles on the road, the possibility of mishaps are greater. According to reports, approximately more than 13,500 people are killed on our roads annually and there is a determined spike to those numbers - especially around the festive season.

What is the real cause of these accidents?

I've spoken to various motoring experts and almost all have confirmed that it is speed that kills. Speed and being downright impatient on the roads. Holiday-makers just want to return to their destinations soonest, often with disastrous and fatal consequences.



SA records reduction in festive season fatalities

24 Dec 2019



Year after year we hear reports of various traffic authorities claiming to clamp down on reckless and drunk-driving, only for the general public to see the number of accidents and fatalities increase.

So, just in case you find yourself involved in a motor vehicle accident, here are some steps to take:

- Remain calm at all times. It is amazing what staying calm can do to prevent a bad situation getting worse.
- If possible, align yourself away from your vehicle and assess the situation. Assist fellow passengers to safely extricate themselves from the vehicle. Where possible, and assuming that there is another vehicle involved, assist the other vehicle's passengers if possible. Stay lane focused and try to avoid oncoming vehicles at all times.
- Should there be any noticeable injuries, contact emergency services and police or road traffic authorities soonest. Some of our national roads have emergency numbers displayed at regular intervals.



EMERGENCY - AMBULANCE - 10177

EMERGENCY - CELL PHONE - 112

EMERGENCY - NATIONAL - 10111

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- It is advisable not to move any of the vehicles that have been involved in an accident. Authorities usually mark the exact resting places of vehicles for a multitude of reasons.
- You are obligated to remain at the scene of an accident until all due processes have been finalised. You can only leave the scene when a traffic officer says you can.
- Take many photos of the vehicles involved as well as their respective licence disc. This gives you all the vital information you will need later, including cell numbers, registration number, VIN no, and make of vehicle. Also, obtain the traffic officers' details which can be obtained from the lapel badges worn on their uniforms.
- Once this is done, you will need to obtain all details of other drivers involved e.g. Drivers Licence, Insurance details etc. If you suspect that there is a driver under the influence of alcohol, you must point this out to the traffic officer on duty at the scene.
- Look around the scene of the accident. There are bound to be witnesses unless you are in a remote part of the country. Take the details of all witnesses as this could prove to be very compelling when the need arises.
- Towing vehicles is sometimes dependent upon the insurance company and their policy around this.
- All accidents must be reported at the nearest police station and the importance of this cannot be over-emphasised.
- Report the accident to your insurance company.

Safe travels and happy motoring!

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

Naresh Maharaj is a petrol head who loves cars and writing about them. He is also a Member of the SA Guild of Motoring Journalists. Naresh is also an international sports correspondent and an acclaimed corporate MC and voice-over artist. Naresh is a sports/news producer for community radio stations and also an award-winning sports journalist. Contact Naresh on nmaharaj321@gmail.com

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