



FIVE THINGS TO DO IF YOU ARE INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT

by *Jonathan Dixon*

Whether a fender-bender or a more serious accident, here are five things to do if you are ever involved in a car accident:

1. **Make sure that you are okay.** If you are in pain, stay still, and do not speak to anyone about the accident – speak only about your injuries to anyone offering to call the paramedics, and to the paramedics themselves. If you feel that you are okay, be careful nevertheless with your physical exertions at the scene of the accident. If you are able, determine if anyone else at the scene may need medical attention. If necessary, have an ambulance called for yourself or anyone else who may need it. Even if you think you are okay, consider going to your doctor or to the emergency room after everything has been dealt with at the scene, to be sure if you are okay.
2. **Call the police and stay at the scene** of the accident until the police officer has come and gone from the scene.
3. **Get the following information** from each other driver involved in the accident: name, address, telephone number, license plate number, driver's license number, insurance company, insurance policy number, and any other relevant information available. Also, get the name and badge number of the police officer(s) at the scene. If possible, get a copy of the police report. If it isn't possible, find out how to get a copy of the police report.
4. **Write down** the name of the street where the accident happened and the nearest street address to the scene of the accident. Sketch the layout of the scene of the accident and where each car came to a stop. Write down the name, address, phone number, and email address of any witnesses. Always keep a pad of paper and a pen or pencil in your glove compartment, as well as a disposable camera (35 mm, not digital) for emergencies. Take plenty of pictures of the scene of the accident and of each car from various angles.
5. **Do not admit fault** to anyone and do not accuse any other driver of being at fault. If there is going to be a dispute as to who is at fault, the scene of the accident is not the appropriate place to settle that. That dispute should be handled later with insurance companies, and legal proceedings, if necessary.