November 11, 2024 Week 46

Safety Brief

CREST INSURANCE GROUP

Adjust and Use Your Rear-View and Side-View Mirrors

Your vehicle's side- and rear-view mirrors are designed to give you a good view of the road behind you while minimizing blind spots. Adjusting them properly is very easy, but it's also key to staying safe on the road.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), each year, blind spots factor into about 840,000 side-to-side collisions, helping cause 300 deaths, plus thousands of injuries millions of dollars in damages. Proper mirror adjustment and use can help minimize blind spots and reduce the chances of a blind spot collision.

If you're driving a car that is not your own, or if you recently let someone else drive your car, it can be very easy to forget to adjust your mirrors before you hit the road. Mirrors can also fall out of adjustment due to vibration or bumps as you drive. However, **it's never a good idea to try to adjust your mirrors while driving** , as distracted driving is a major cause of vehicle accidents. Instead, get in the habit of taking a quick glance at all your mirrors before you set off to make sure your rearward visibility is optimized!

Follow the steps below to adjust and use your mirrors properly.

1. How to Adjust Your Side Mirrors

Here's how to adjust your left and right side-view mirrors for the best visibility:

2. **Locate your car's mirror adjustment controls.** Most modern cars have an electronic switch that controls the position of your left and right-side mirrors. These switches will have buttons that move your mirrors upward, downward, left, and right. They'll also have a button that switches control between the left mirror and the right mirror. It's important to know where this switch is located in any car you drive and how to operate it, so it's easy to adjust your side mirrors.

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3. **Adjust the side-to-side position.** Toggle the side mirror adjustment switch to control your left-side mirror. Then, move your head until it's resting against the lift-side window. Look at your left-side mirror, and adjust it until you can just barely see the edge of your car in the inside of the mirror. Then, toggle the mirror adjustment switch to control your right-side mirror. Move your head to the right, so it's positioned right above your car's center console. Now, set the ride-side mirror, so you can just start to see the edge of your car on the inside of the mirror. This positioning will help maximize your view of the road behind you while minimizing your blind spots.
4. **Adjust the up-and-down position.** Use the side mirror adjustment switches to set your side-view mirrors vertical position. You should give yourself the best possible view of the road behind, but exact vertical placement often comes down to personal preference. You don't want to see too much sky or too much road. Instead, it's best to balance the position of each mirror so you can see traffic clearly as well as curbs while parallel parking.

5. How to Adjust Your Rear-View Mirror

Once your side mirrors are adjusted properly, it's easy to adjust your rear-view mirror. Be sure to sit normally and use minimal head movements when looking at your rear-view mirror. Then, manually move the mirror until your view is straight out of your car's rear window, centered, and level. The goal is always to maximize your rearward view.

Depending on your vehicle, your rear-view mirror may also have a manual adjustment tab for night-time driving. These tabs are generally in the center of your mirror, along the bottom. Moving the tab all the way forward or backward will adjust the tilt position of the rear-view mirror. In the daytime position, it will look normal. But, in the night-time position, you will be unable to see much of anything, except headlights. Use this position for driving at night, so other cars' headlights don't obscure your vision but be sure to switch back for day-time driving. If your rear-view mirror does not have a manual adjustment tab, it should handle this switch for you automatically.

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6. How to Use Your Mirrors While Driving

Together, your car's mirrors will give you a good view of the road around and behind your car. It's best to scan all of your mirrors frequently while driving, using quick glances rather than long, extended stares that can distract you from the road ahead. As you're driving, glance at each mirror roughly once every 10 seconds, at minimum. This way, you can build up a mental picture of the cars around you on the road.

While mirrors alone will not eliminate your blind spots fully, having them adjusted properly and using them correctly will help you keep track of other cars around you. You should always check your blind spots with a quick turn of the head before changing lanes or making any other lateral movements. But, actively monitoring your mirrors and tracking your fellow motorists can help you avoid surprises and potential accidents.

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Trainer:_____ Trainer's Signature: _____

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