Passenger safety: Tips every driver and rider should know.

Half of the time you drive, but the other half, you ride. And when you find yourself in the passenger seat, there are key responsibilities that fall on your shoulders, too. Passenger safety starts with this list of tips.

Passenger safety: DO

- **Wear your seatbelt.** Don't give the driver anything to worry about. Buckle up promptly when you get into the vehicle. It's the safe thing to do, and in most states, it's the law.
- **Control the phone.** Drivers should always have their hands on the wheel. That means if something urgent comes up on their phone and needs to be addressed, it's on you to manage the phone, not them. Better yet, reduce distractions for both of you by putting your phones in the center console until you reach your destination.
- **Be the co-pilot.** When you're going to a new place, help navigate. Use verbal and hand signal cues to help the driver so they don't have to take their eyes off the road to look at a navigation system.
- **Be an extra set of eyes and ears.** When they're backing out, see if someone's behind them. When they're turning, make sure the coast is clear. At night, watch for deer and other animals that may try to cross in front of you. Keep your head on a swivel to ensure you arrive safely.
- **Control the music and the temperature.** It's always easier and safer for the passenger to pick the playlist. Need to adjust the temperature? That's a great job for the passenger, too.

Passenger safety: DON’T

- **Be a backseat driver.** Often, you’re just trying to help, but pointing out everything the driver does wrong can do more harm than good. If you do need to alert the driver of danger, try to keep your voice level. Loud or sudden noises can spook drivers into swerving or slamming on their brakes.
- **Create too much noise.** When the music is too loud, it can affect a driver’s concentration. When passengers are talking too loudly, the same thing can happen.
- **Engage in risky behavior.** Hanging out the window, standing through the sunroof, throwing items in the vehicle, and riding in the bed of a truck put both passengers and drivers at risk. Don’t play games in a vehicle or with your life.
- **Turn on the lights.** A bright light inside can make it so the driver can’t see outside. If you must be on your phone for navigation, turn the brightness down to reduce distractions.
- **Fall asleep.** Keep your driver company as much as possible by staying awake and alert along the drive. When the passenger sleeps, it can make the driver sleepier, too.
- **Grab the wheel.** If you see an obstacle the driver doesn’t, the most dangerous thing you can do is reach for the steering wheel. Instead, quickly and calmly let them know.
- **Ignore unsafe driving.** Is the driver speeding, swerving, running lights, or breaking other rules of the road? Don’t keep quiet. Kindly and calmly speak up, even if it’s uncomfortable. You could even offer to drive if someone’s stress or mood is causing risky driving behavior.

Abiding by these passenger safety tips can protect the safety of your vehicle, the ones around you, and other bikers or pedestrians on the road. For more protection behind the wheel, talk to a local, independent agent about comprehensive auto insurance today.

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