



Lane Departure

In Kentucky there were 22,000 lane departure crashes, resulting in 7,754 injuries and 264 fatalities in 2008. These types of crashes accounted for 18 percent of all traffic collisions, 32 percent of all fatalities and 21 percent of all injuries occurring on Kentucky highways.



The majority of these crashes occur on low traffic volume two-lane roads, even though rural roads carry only 14 percent of Kentucky's traffic.

Types of lane departure collisions

- **Collision with a fixed object** : Occurs when a vehicle collides with a guardrail, tree, roadway sign, etc.
- **Collision with a non-fixed object**: Occurs when a vehicle collides with a deer, pedestrian, bicycle, etc.
- **Run-off-road**: Occurs when a vehicle runs off the roadway due to another vehicle, driver inattention/distraction or driver fatigue.
- **Head-on collision**: Occurs when a vehicle leaves the roadway and its driver over-compensates while trying to regain control, sending it into the opposing traffic lane. Also, a driver may swerve into oncoming traffic due to driver inattention/distraction or fatigue.
- **Sideswipe collision**: Occurs when a vehicle leaves its traffic lane and hits the side of another vehicle.



Regain control of your vehicle

If you run off the roadway, remember these steps to re-enter your traffic lane safely:

- Do not use the brakes or accelerator.
- Get a firm grip on the steering wheel and steer smoothly toward the roadway.
- Gently straighten the steering wheel once the front tire is back on the pavement.

Avoid a rollover

Be alert! Rollovers occur frequently on curved, rural roads so pay attention while driving. Remember, the narrower the road, the less margin for error.

Don't panic! Many rollovers stem from drivers abruptly turning the steering wheel in an effort to quickly get the tires back onto pavement.

Don't speed! Striking a ditch or embankment at high speeds may cause the vehicle to flip.

Did you know?

Nationwide, there are:



THREE lane departure **fatalities** every hour.

ONE lane departure **injury** every minute.

THREE lane departure **crashes** every minute.

Sources: American Automobile Association (AAA), and National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP)

What can you do?

Educate yourself on the human factors that contribute to lane departure crashes and change your driving behavior if necessary. The human factors are:

- **Excessive speed**
- **Inattention**
- **Lack of driving experience**
- **Low seat belt usage**
- **Impairment due to alcohol, drugs, medication, or fatigue**



What can we do?

The Transportation Cabinet is committed to substantially reducing lane departure fatalities and injuries in a cost-effective manner, and is a lead state on lane departure initiatives. Some examples of our efforts and proposed improvements include:

- Install safety devices such as center and shoulder rumble strips, buffer medians and guardrails.
- Improve shoulder drop-offs, slopes and ditches if allowable.
- Test strategies in pilot project areas.
- Develop a directed patrol program targeting lane departure high crash locations and two-lane roads.
- Increase communication with local media to promote lane departure issues, programs, and results.
- Continue support of highway safety educational programs.



What are rumble strips?

Rumble strips are raised or grooved patterns on the roadway center or shoulder that provide both an audible warning (rumbling sound) and a physical vibration to alert drivers that they are leaving the driving lane. There are two types of rumble strips used in Kentucky:



Shoulder: Most state-maintained roads have rumble strips located on the shoulder to prevent lane departure collisions.

Center: Selected state-maintained roads with two or four lanes not divided by a median have rumble strips in the center to prevent head-on collisions.



For additional information:

- **American Automobile Association:** www.aaa.com
- **AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety:** www.aaafoundation.org
- **Federal Highway Administration:** <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/>
- **National Cooperative Highway Research Program:** <http://www.trb.org/CRP/NCHRP/NCHRP.asp>
- **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:** www.nhtsa.dot.gov

