



## Avoiding Left Turns

### Avoiding Left Turns Improves the Bottom Line

If you could improve your bottom line by implementing a simple, low, or no cost solution, would you do it? Businesses that rely on automobiles to deliver goods or services, that solution is avoiding left turns.

Planning routes to avoid left turns will help drivers avoid accidents, improve delivery times, and decrease fuel expenses.

### Avoid Accidents

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that “close to half of the 5.8 million car crashes in the U.S. are intersection-related and the majority of those are the result of making a left turn.” If the driving public made a conscious effort to reduce the number of left turns, then millions of car crashes could be avoided.

Accidents involving left-turns are preventable. Drivers making a left turn can be cited for “failure to yield” or “violating the right-of-way.” Statistics indicates that there are substantial costs incurred with preventable motor vehicle accidents.

Accident Costs: Direct, Indirect, and Intangible		
Direct Cost “Hard Dollars”	Indirect Cost “Soft Dollars”	Intangible “Soft Dollars”
Collision – Property Damage	Lost Revenue	Shift in Work Priorities
Liability – Property Damage or Bodily Injury	Lost Profit	Public Image/Reputation
Replacement Transportation	Lost Opportunity	Customer Retention/Employee Perception
Workers’ Compensation (replacement labor, legal expenses)	Insurance (deductibles/premium)	Threat of Litigation

The National Safety Council (NSC) estimates that for every one “hard” dollar an employer spends on an accident, an additional three to eight “soft” dollar costs may incur.

### Improve Delivery Times and Fuel Economy

Making left turns take longer regardless of whether intersections are controlled or uncontrolled. A vehicle making a left turn idles longer by waiting for a traffic signal to change or for the oncoming traffic lane to clear. The costs of idling can significantly impact a business fuel expenses and employee production times. Logistics giant United Parcel Service implemented a left turn avoidance policy in 2007. In a 2010 interview with *Fortune*, Bob Stoffel, UPS Senior VP revealed that the company’s routing software saved 20.4 million miles off routes and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 20,000 metric tons. This policy allowed UPS to deliver an estimated 350,000 more packages with 50,000 fewer miles on the road.



While most businesses cannot match the scale of improvements implemented by UPS, its model provided strong validation that a left-turn avoidance policy can improve safety, timeliness, and ultimately a company's bottom line.

### Smart Route Planning

A simple solution to reduce or eliminate left turns is to plan delivery routes strategically.

- Identify busy or high traffic intersections, and designate those areas as restricted or no travel zones.
- Make use of readily available mobile GPS road restriction services to help your drivers navigate to and from your customers locations without or limiting the need to make left turns.
- Instruct your drivers on the risks associated with left turns, honoring the right-of-way, and the cost savings benefits of avoiding left turns.

#### REFERENCES:

1. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Crash Factors in Intersection-Related Crashes: An On-Scene Perspective, 2010
2. Geoff Colvin, "Bob Stoffel's UPS Green Dream", *Fortune Magazine* (December 27, 2010, Volume 162, No. 10: Special Issue) Investors Guide 2011
3. NAFA, Risk Management Guide (Chapter 5: Crash Management; 5.1 Benefits of Crash Prevention, p. 71-75)
4. The KABCO severity scale (National Safety Council, 1990)

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