



# Basic Evasive Driving Techniques

*Product of the OSAC Research & Information Support Center (RISC)  
in conjunction with the Diplomatic Security Training Center*

A driver's proper mindset is both reactive and proactive, allowing her to be reactive in a productive way, and helping her to recognize the signs of an attack that may only register as instinct. How can you use driving skills to help thwart and escape from an attack while you are in a vehicle?

- Look for pre-attack indicators
- Randomly vary times and routes
- Have an escape plan
- Know those around you

## **Pre-attack Indicators**

Gather intelligence about your operating environment. Pre-attack indicators are usually something, someone or some act that is not normal.

Assess the threat? (The 5 Ws):

1. WHO is conducting the attack? Who is being attacked?
2. WHAT type of attacks? (Blocking car, Improvised Explosive Device (IED), gun)
3. WHERE are these attacks taking place? (Also known as "The X")
4. WHEN are the attacks occurring? (e.g. time of day, year, holidays, anniversaries)
5. WHY are the targets selected? (e.g. anti-Western sentiment)

There are numerous resources for this information, including OSAC, the Regional Security Office (RSO), open-source media, and other trusted and experienced colleagues or sources. The information needs to be internalized and adapted to specific situations. You are most vulnerable when you move. Use as much information as possible to analyze your potential routes.

## **Choke Points**

Any place you travel on a routine basis where the route taken cannot be altered is a "choke point." It could be as localized, near to your destination, and protected as a driveway, or it may be miles long with many good attack sites. Analyze possible alternative routes to find choke points. If you cannot change the route then vary the times that you travel through. All choke points are dangerous, but not all choke points make good attack sites.

Inside a choke point, a potential assailant may be looking for:

- Cover/concealment (e.g. physical cover)
- The ability to use a ruse (e.g. a traffic accident)
- The ability to control access / contain the target (e.g. heavy traffic, one-way streets, or toll barriers)
- Their own ability to escape

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## Escape Plans

Plan a predetermined reaction. People are predisposed to respond in certain ways. By elevating your awareness and preparing to recognize the warning signs of danger, you will have a better chance to respond quickly and appropriately.

- Be familiar with choke points prior to an attack
- Visualize exits; know the closest safe place
- Drive through (forward) or reverse out (backward)
- Know the available drivable terrain; you may have to drive through a fence or over a curb
- If necessary, use your vehicle to ram vehicles out of the way

## Surveillance Detection

Look for people watching you, watch for vehicles following you, especially in or near a choke point.

- One sighting of a potentially suspicious vehicle - Maybe nothing
- Two sightings - Suspicious behavior
- Three sightings, even separated by time or distance - **Assume Surveillance**
- Target identification is the signal that often starts the attack. The target ID will be located in or near the attack site. It may be the last chance you have to recognize danger before the actual attack starts.

## **EVASION IN REVERSE**

You may need to escape an attack by driving your vehicle in reverse.

### **What is the correct speed for evasive reversing?**

The correct speed is one that gets you out of the negative situation safely, which is to say it varies based on the vehicle you are driving, the conditions around you, and your overall familiarity and comfort level.

There are two methods that can be used in evasive reversing: looking over your shoulder and directly out the rear window; and using exterior mirrors to navigate. Again, the correct method is the one that gets you out safely.



### **Ensure correct lane for direction of travel**

- Make small smooth steering inputs
- Go fast in straightaways
- Apply the brake gradually
- Slow down before turns
- If car becomes unstable due to speed, take foot off of gas to reduce speed

### **Backing Escape:**

- Get as much distance between you and an assailant as possible. Remember that small-arms fire can reach 300+ meters.
- Break the line of sight by turning your vehicle around a corner, going over the crest of a hill, or putting a building between you and your assailant.
- Be sure to look back at the assailant periodically – preferably on a straightaway – to determine the distance between you.
- Conduct a three-point turn (“Y” Turn) when possible. Driving in reverse is an evasive maneuver, but performing a “Y” turn in a safe area will allow you to drive forward—and potentially be more successful in your evasion.

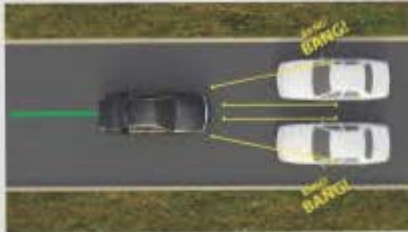
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## Attack Escape

### ATTACK FROM FRONT

1. Back away.
2. Get distance and/or break line of sight before turning around.



### STATIONARY ATTACK FROM SIDE

Accelerate rapidly (DRIVE THROUGH).



### RAMMING

Offset your vehicle so one of the frame rails hits the blocking vehicle's wheel.



### ACCELERATE THROUGH



## Note to Reader

All vehicle control emergencies are highly variable and stress inducing. There is no guarantee the techniques reviewed in this publication can work in every situation.

## SUVs and Armored Vehicles

High center-of-gravity (CG) vehicles require greater caution. Although abrupt steering causes only minor skidding in a low CG vehicle, it may cause a rollover in a high CG vehicle.



Under inflation can reduce vehicle steering and braking response and cause blowouts.

- For armored SUV's, inflate to max pressure on sidewall unless another specification is given. Max load indicated on the sidewall of these tires should be 2680 pounds.
- For non-armored vehicles, inflate to vehicle manufacturer's specs (owner's manual or door jamb).



## We Need Your Feedback!

The DTU is committed to providing a high level of service to all personnel serving in high threat environments. If you find this publication useful, have suggestions for improvement, or need additional information, please contact [DSDTU@state.gov](mailto:DSDTU@state.gov).

## Handling Vehicle Control Emergencies

Crash Avoidance  
Skid Control  
Attack Escape  
High Speed Driving  
SUVs and Armored Vehicles



U. S. Department of State Diplomatic Security

Driver Training Unit (DTU)



## GOOD CONTROL IS NO ACCIDENT

- Even at high threat posts, no one thinks vehicle control emergencies (e.g., avoiding a wreck in a dangerous neighborhood, or escaping an attack) can happen to them.
- When you react, how accurately you brake, steer, or accelerate can be just as important as how fast you respond.

### Form

Keep shoulders back in the seat, **and** avoid leaning sideways when cornering.



The ideal "ready" position.



**AVOID LOCKING HANDS**  
and **CROSSING ARMS**.



Toes *on* brake.  
Heel *on* floor.



## Weight and Traction



When a vehicle turns, traction on the outside tires increases.

Accelerating moves traction to the back.



Braking increases traction in the front.



## Braking

- If going straight, squeeze to the threshold of lock-up (with ABS, press as hard as you can).
- If braking in a curve, start soft and progressively increase pressure.
- To steer, relax brake slightly to have more available traction for steering response.

## Crash Avoidance

**Panic Abrupt Steer**

- Always steer smoothly, even if it means a side-swipe (rubbing the side of a car).
- If you go off the road, **EASE BACK ON**.

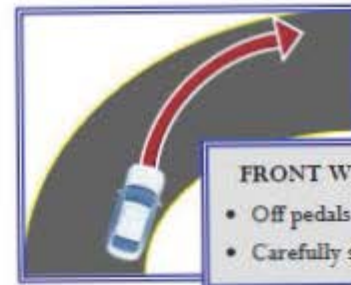
**Patience Smooth Steer**

AND ALWAYS...



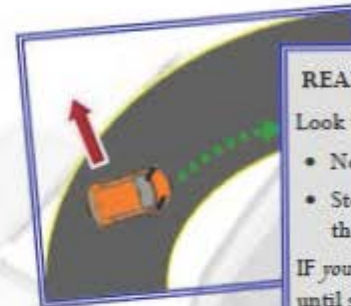
**Look Where You Want to Go**

## Skid Control



**FRONT WHEELS** Track Wide

- Off pedals.
- Carefully steer into lane.



**REAR WHEELS** Slide Out

Look where you want to go:

- No pedals.
- Steer in the direction of the skid.

IF you *spin*, **FULL BRAKE** until stopped.

## High Speed Driving

- Carry speed on straights.
- Slow down before turns.

