

Injuries are not Accidents

Injuries are not accidents.
Injuries are predictable
and preventable.

An **accident** can be defined as an unexpected or undesirable event; or an event occurring by chance.¹

For example, motor vehicle crashes are not accidents—they are predictable and can be prevented. Referring to motor vehicle crashes as "accidents" contributes to the perception that they cannot be prevented; when, in fact, very few crashes occur because of uncontrollable circumstances.²

"A crash is not an accident. Changing the way we think about events and the words we use to describe them affects the way we behave." Continued use of the word "accident" implies that these events are outside human influence or control. In reality, they are predictable results of specific actions. Since we can identify the causes of crashes, we can take action to alter the effect and avoid collisions. "Crash," "collision," and "injury" are more appropriate terms, and we encourage their use as substitutes for "accident."³ (George L. Reagle, FHA)



CRASHES
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Traffic enforcement is no accident. It is a specific action that results in predictable results. It helps remove impaired drivers from the road and enforce speed limits and rules of the road. It is one way to **prevent** many crashes from occurring. These stops also provide an opportunity for law enforcement officers to reinforce the importance of seat belt and child seat use which prevent injuries.

Injury prevention is based on the principle that injuries are predictable and preventable.

References

1. American Heritage Dictionary
2. <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/enforce/Beyond/percept.htm>
3. <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about/news/news-releases/1997/091897.htm>
(George L. Reagle, Associate Administrator for Motor Carriers)