

Distracted motorists cut up by rise in lane change crashes

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- Lane change collisions responsible for 1 in 14 accidents in 2014
- Rise of 29.5% in this type of accident from 2010
- Distracting tech hinders decision-making

Lane change collisions are on the increase and distracted drivers could be to blame, according to research by Accident Exchange.

Collisions in which a vehicle was struck or sideswiped by another moving into a different lane increased from 5.53% of all incidents in 2010 to 7.16% of incidents recorded in 2014.

In real terms, this represents a worrying increase in lane change incidents of almost a third (29.5%) over the last four years.

The increase in lane change errors could be linked to the rise of the smartphone and in-car connectivity. Using a mobile phone at the wheel slows reaction time by around 50% and quadruples the likelihood of having an accident*.

Liz Fisher, Director of Sales Development at Accident Exchange, said: "We have seen steady growth in the number of accidents resulting from errors made when changing lanes.

"Lane changes demand a driver's full attention and swift reactions but too many drivers are diverting their focus from the road and putting themselves – and other road users – at risk.

"Time spent using a mobile or hastily following instructions from a satnav system can prevent a driver from making the necessary checks before merging into the next lane."

The statistic has emerged in spite of growth in crash avoidance technology. Toyota, VW, Mercedes, Volvo and Nissan are among the manufacturers to develop features such as autonomous braking and systems which detect drivers who are at risk of wandering into another lane.

Drivers who misjudge a space and strike moving traffic when they enter a lane are always considered to be at fault, according to law.

Accident Exchange, part of the Automotive & Insurance Solutions Group, has commercial partnerships with 1,500 franchised dealerships and, last year, guaranteed onward mobility of 100,000 customers.

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Notes to editors

*According to the Department of Transport's road safety website, THINK!

Accident Exchange

Through its dedicated service centre and fleet of vehicles, Accident Exchange helps motorists who have found themselves on the wrong end of an accident regain their mobility. Removing some of the stress resulting from a crash, Accident Exchange will interact with insurers, organise repairs and keep drivers mobile.

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