

Hazardous Road Debris

SAFETY SHARE COURTESY OF: Jenna Nyberg, TXAPA Marketing Assistant



It's always important to stay alert when driving, but unexpected items in the road can throw off even the most attentive drivers. According to TxDOT, 2,551 accidents on Texas roadways in 2020 were caused by road debris. Whether it's a tire, tree limb, roadkill, or furniture, here are a few tips for safely navigating hazards in the road:

- **Scan the road as far ahead as possible to help spot debris.** Be especially alert when driving in the dark, in the fog, or in poor weather conditions.
- **Watch the actions of drivers ahead of you.** Brake lights might indicate a hazard in the road.
- **Pay attention to your surroundings.** If you find yourself behind another vehicle carrying a loose load, back off and change lanes or pass the vehicle when you can do so safely.
- **If you suddenly come across road debris, avoid slamming on the brakes or swerving suddenly to avoid it.** Nearly 37% of all deaths in road debris-related crashes occur when a driver swerves to avoid hitting an object. Instead, try to maneuver around the object as smoothly and carefully as you can.
- **If you are unable to avoid hitting debris on the roadway, safely reduce your speed as much as possible before making contact.** If you think your vehicle may have been damaged by the debris, pull off the road to a safe location, assess the damage, and make any necessary phone calls for further action.
- **Do not attempt to remove roadway debris yourself.** If the debris is large and/or hazardous, call local law enforcement and they will contact TxDOT to safely remove the item(s).