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Clover Connection

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Turn your car into a Smart Car for 2017

Many of us have heard of “smart cars” or the ones that have driverless technology, but did you know there are things you can do in your car to make it smarter? Here is some great advice from our AgriLife Passenger Safety department about safe driving as we kick off the New Year.

While you are waiting for smart cars — also referred to as driverless cars — to be mass produced, you may be able to create your own “Smart Car” in 2017. The main incentive for smart cars is that they will eliminate driver error from causing a crash. Studies show that most crashes are in fact due to driver error. So, here are some steps that you can take to make your car as driver-error free as a new Smart Car.

Smart cars will not suddenly drift out of their lane, which is usually due to driver distraction. Multi-tasking behind the wheel is dangerous. Change your driving habits so that you will always be focusing on the road ahead and prepared for any sudden changes. That means eliminating distractions while driving, such as shutting off your cellphone and other devices that take your eyes off the road, refraining from eating, drinking, reading, grooming, smoking, and any other activity that takes your mind and eyes off the road, will eliminate more driver-error and create safer roadways.

Smart cars will not get caught speeding — and neither should yours. Drive the posted speed limit and reduce your speed when conditions are not optimal, including at night when visibility is lower. Slow down when the roadway is wet or icy, or if there is a limit on visibility due to fog.

Smart cars will also not be following the car in front of them too closely, which is the cause of many rear end collisions. Make sure to leave a good distance between your car and the car in front of you so you will have plenty of time to react in case of an unexpected change ahead.

Smart cars will not be driven by impaired drivers, either through the use of alcohol, drugs or lack of sleep. Take action to make sure you are always fully alert and not driving impaired or drowsy. If needed, make sure to have a designated sober driver.

Most importantly, smart cars will not be traveling with unbuckled occupants. Making sure that all of your passengers, young and old, are properly buckled up is one of the smartest steps you can take to prevent injuries and deaths due to a traffic crash. Remember that passengers in the front and back need to be buckled up. Check with a certified child passenger safety technician to make sure that your car seat is appropriate for the child's age, weight, and is installed correctly facing the right direction.

Being a smart driver in 2017 will help save your life, as well as the lives of your passengers and others on the road!

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