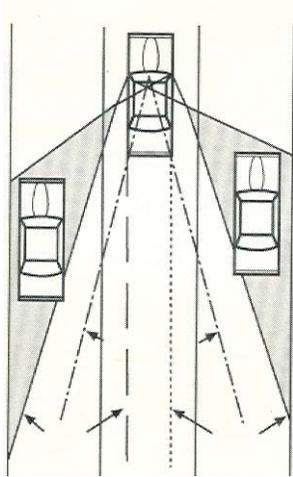


Adjust Mirrors to Eliminate Blind Spots

According to a 2003 study, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration identified about 539,000 lane change crashes in 1999. Of these, more than 200,000 were “typical lane changes.” The majority involve drivers who did not see the other vehicle.

Drivers can shrink the size of the blind zone by adjusting the rear and side view mirrors. This approach was devised by George Platzter, a specialist in rear-view mirror design.

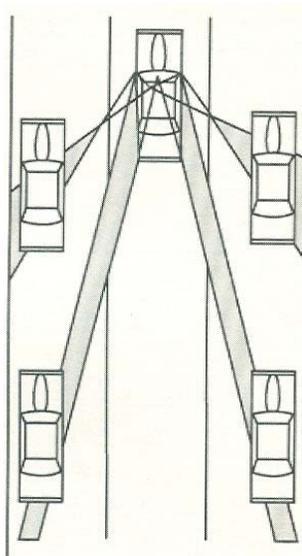
Drawing A illustrates what a driver sees when outside mirrors are set so that the sides of the car



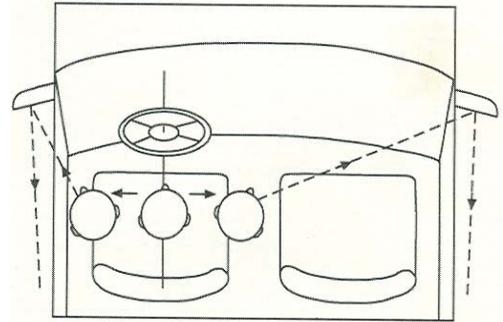
Drawing A

are just visible. The blind zones are big enough to hide a vehicle so the driver must turn and look into the blind zones when changing lanes.

Rotate the two outside mirrors outward about 15 degrees to allow the driver to glance briefly into the mirror to look into the blind zones instead of turning their head (Drawing B). Even though there are four mini-blind zones, they all too small to hide a vehicle. This keeps the forward scene in the driver's peripheral view. Turning one's head completely eliminates the forward view, and at highway speeds, takes the eyes off the road for about 100 feet. At night, glare from the outside mirrors is virtually eliminated.



Drawing B



Drawing C

Setting Mirrors

To adjust the driver's side mirror, place your head against the side window (*Drawing C*), and then set the mirror to just see the side of the car. Do the same with the passenger's side mirror, position your head at the middle of the car.

To ensure that the blind zones are eliminated, from the normal driving position, watch a car as it passes. It should appear in the outside mirror before it leaves the inside mirror, and it should appear in the peripheral vision before leaving the outside mirror. This is proof that the blind zones have been eliminated and that the mirrors are correctly set.

It may take awhile to adjust to the new settings. Don't give up. The inside mirror is the primary mirror. Use the outside mirrors only to check blind zones.

Source:
Vermont Local Roads News, September, 2006