

## Could This Collision Have Been Prevented?

### Don't Look Down

It was morning rush hour. Carmen sighed, knowing that she would be in stop-and-go traffic for the next hour. It wasn't much to look forward to. But at least she had hot coffee and a donut to help her wake up. After that she would have to think about the agenda for the sales meeting later that morning.

Carmen placed the donut in a napkin in her lap, held the coffee cup in her left hand and attempted to pull the plastic tab on the lid while steering with her right elbow.



The tab came loose with a jerk, causing her to dump hot coffee in her lap. She gave a cry of disgust, and slapped the soaked napkin off her lap. She didn't even see the stopped car in front of her until she hit it.

1. It's obvious from this story that Carmen shouldn't have been trying to manipulate coffee while driving. What general principles of defensive driving does this story show that Carmen needs to learn? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How could this collision have been prevented? \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Answers:

1. Stay alert, scanning the road ahead for hazards, including stopped traffic. Eliminate in-car distractions. Focus on the task of driving; leave other activities for when you're not behind the wheel. Be especially alert in stop-and-go commute traffic.

2. If Carmen had not been distracted by spilled coffee, she might have been scanning the road ahead. She would have noticed brake lights going on several cars ahead, and she would have been prepared to brake. The stopped traffic wouldn't have taken her by surprise.

