

Introduction: Debris happens.

“Pieces of concrete, nails, pieces of pipe, rebar, wood, sofas, chairs - all kinds of stuff ...”

- Sergeant Dwayne Cooper of the Florida Highway Patrol

According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, at highway speeds, small debris can be deadly. Items such as hand tools, tires, tarps, and tie-down straps pose a serious danger if they land on the highway.

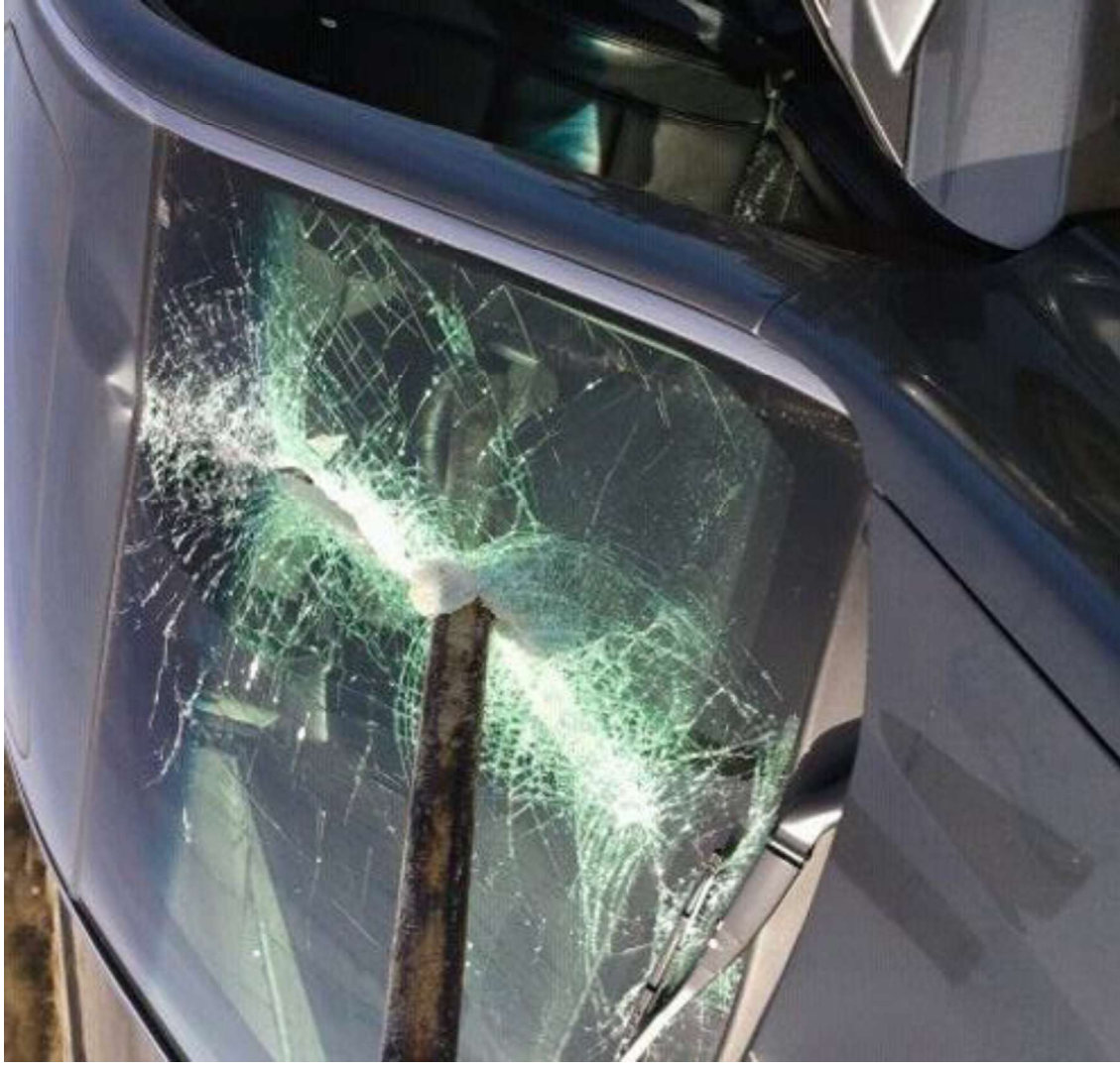
Additionally, crashes involving road debris account for over 25,000 incidences each year including as many as 90 fatalities.

Alan J. Pakula

April 7, 1928 – November 19, 1998 (aged 70)

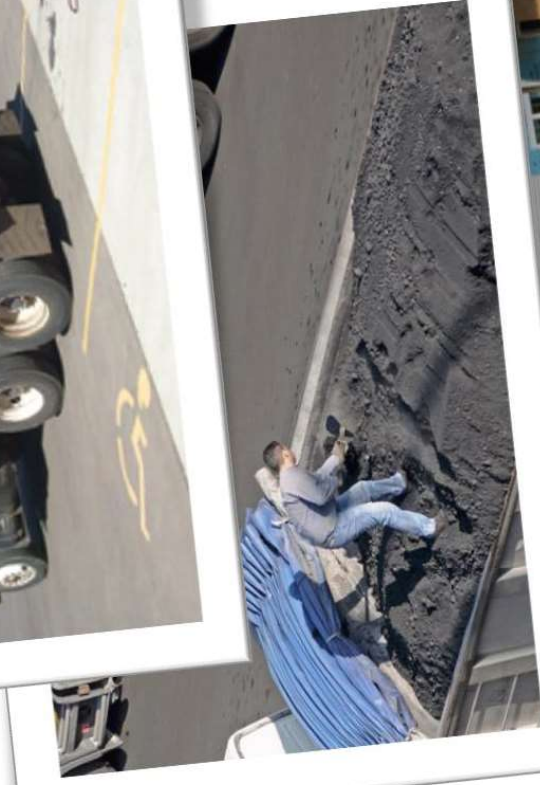


Film director Alan J. Pakula (*All The President's Men*, *Sophie's Choice*, *The Pelican Brief*, etc.) was killed on November 19, 1998 when a car in front of him struck a metal pipe which was then propelled through Pakula's windshield striking him in the head and causing his car to swerve off the road. He was killed instantly.



It Starts with Securing Vehicle Loads Properly

- Make sure the bed of the truck (dump or pick-up) is covered and secured.
- Every reasonable effort must be made to secure loads effectively.
- Unsecured tarps allow debris to blow out.
- Even small pieces of metal, wood, or concrete can create a dangerous situation for other motorists.



It Starts with Securing Vehicle Loads Properly

- If a vehicle has a loose load, items can fall off and cause a traffic safety issue.



Watch the Road

- The best way to not hit debris is to keep scanning the road in front of you.
- Debris can appear at any time from anywhere.
- People have reported outrageous items on the highway, but anything in the way can damage tires or lead to the loss of control.



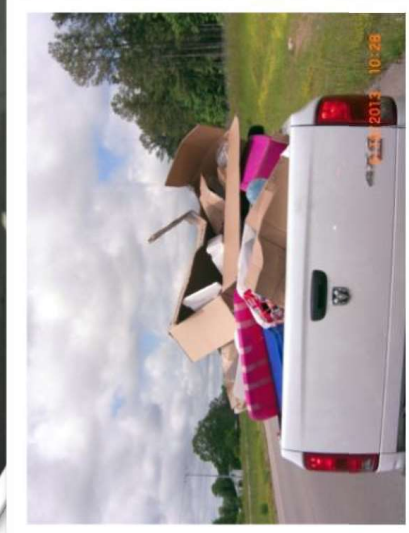
Watch the Road

- Common debris items include:
 - Treads stripped from truck tires
 - Flat tires
 - Tools
 - Organic material, i.e., wood, dirt, stones, branches, etc.
- Debris can also be vehicle parts that have fallen off and left on the road.



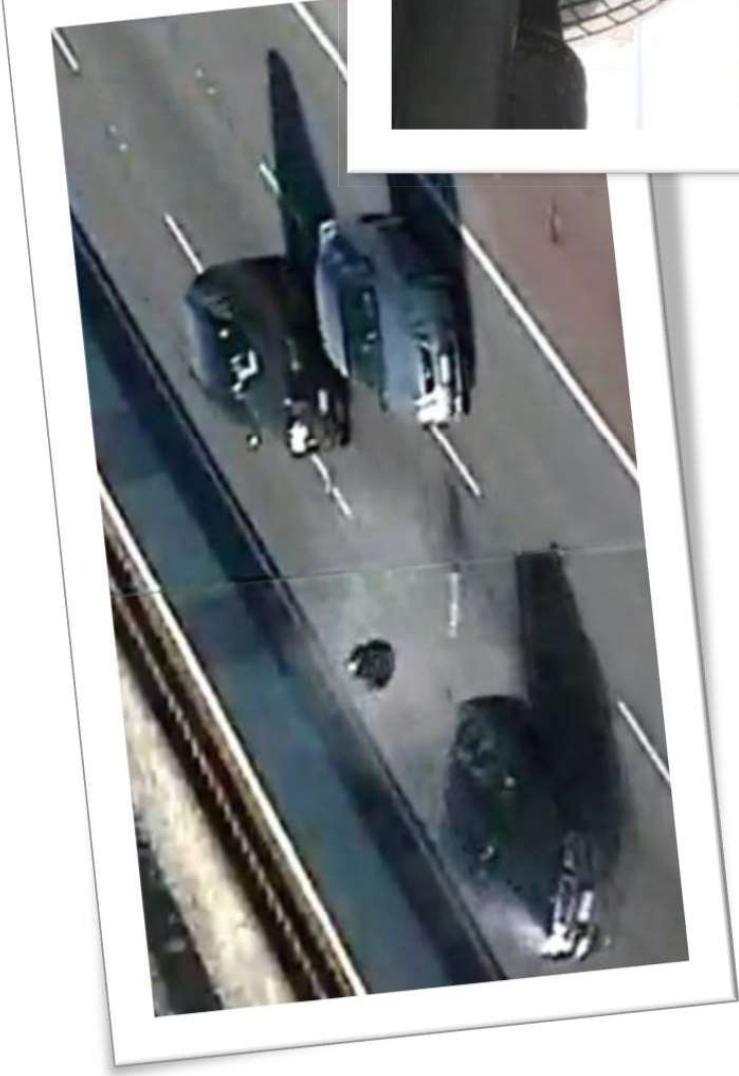
Watch the Road

- Items improperly tied onto vehicles, such as mattresses, furniture, people, etc. pose a threat to drivers since they can be blown off and land anywhere.
- Pay attention to vehicles carrying loads that could fall onto the road – give them extra space or pass them if it is safe to do so.



Your Maneuverability & Escape ...

- Plan ahead while driving – think about where to maneuver the vehicle in an instant if you really had to swerve to avoid an object in the roadway.
- Unexpected obstacles in the travel lane can cause drivers to:
 - Swerve to avoid
 - Straddle in the hopes of successfully passing over
 - Hit objects causing serious damage to the vehicle
 - Launch an object into another vehicle



Notify the Authorities

- When you observe dangerous situations on the highway, it is a good idea to notify the authorities as soon as it is safe to do so.
- In most state, you can **dial 911 for emergencies**, but it is better to report "non-emergency" highway-safety related issues by dialing "0" to request help.
- Some states have special cellphone-only numbers such as ***SP (star 77)** for **State Police** or ***HP (star 47)** for **Highway Patrol**, to report highway/vehicle related problems.
- These cell phone only calls can be used to report accidents, vehicle breakdowns/problems, hazardous material spills, debris, or other highway hazards/problems, as well as impaired or aggressive/reckless drivers and other criminal behavior.

