

Missiles Thrown From Bridges

This type of crime has been an ongoing issue around the world for many years. Recently there have been a number of incidents on Adelaide's Southern Expressway where rocks and chunks of clay have been dropped from some of the bridges crossing the expressway. While these incidents are serious and have received large amounts of publicity it is worth noting that the actual likelihood of being hit by such an object is really quite small. At the time of rewriting this sheet (23rd June 2018) there have been 37 incidents this year. In excess of 50,000 vehicles a day use the expressway which means this year meaning in excess of 8.7 million vehicles have travelled the expressway, making the odds 1:>235,000, roughly half as likely as being struck and killed by lightning.

How Can I Prepare for This?

The best preparation is to have a mental plan of what you will do if this happens to you. Scan bridges as you approach. If you see anything suspicious check your mirrors and in front of you; decide where you will steer if the worst happens. If you see something fall, don't try and swerve or brake – you are more likely to then be involved in a collision which may well cause more damage, both to you and your car. If you can, shield your face with one arm, keep one hand on the steering wheel and tighten your grip. If something does hit your windscreen it will be very loud, be prepared for this. Most, if not all, windscreens in vehicles today are made of laminated glass so will not shatter.

As most of my students will know, I often use aviation type info in my lessons. The thing drilled into pilots for dealing with any emergency is *Aviate, Navigate, Communicate*. Obviously we aren't taking off, hopefully, but drive the car – keep it under control, steer it to a place of safety – the shoulder, when you are safe call the police. (131 444 or 000)

When stopping on the shoulder, remember what you were taught in your freeway lesson:

- 1) Hazard lights
- 2) Side Lights
- 3) Park Brake and Park (Neutral in manual)
- 4) Wheels angled towards verge