It happened to me. It can happen to you. It’s time to prevent vehicle-into-building crashes.

August 5, 2015

Easy Lessons

Editor's Note: This post is co-published on the Storefront Safety Council blog.

It’s so easy to think we’ll be coming back when we walk out the door in the morning, isn’t it? As we grab our keys and turn that lock, we say to ourselves, “Oh, I’ll do that later,” or “I’ll make that phone call when I get home tonight.”

That’s what I thought, too, when I left to start what I assumed would be a normal day in August 2008. Little did I know that just a few hours later, I’d get hit by a car as it crashed through the doors of my favorite nearby 7-Eleven. I didn’t come through my own front door again until many weeks later, after spending time in two hospitals and two nursing homes.

It would be nice now, seven years later, to just chalk that experience up to a life-lesson learned or a weird fluke that just a few of us experience. But when I heard in the news about a car that crashed into a building recently just down the street from where I once worked, I was reminded that this problem is not a rare fluke. In fact, it’s all too common.

This particular incident wasn’t very different from those you can read about throughout the pages here of storefrontcrashes.com or on store frontsafety.org: “An elderly woman smashed her car through a Rockville, Maryland, parking garage and into a physical therapy office,” according to one of the TV news reports.

Unfortunately, she injured herself as well as others, particularly a receptionist at the PT office — sitting at her desk doing her work like any other seemingly normal day — who was pinned under a desk and debris by the crash.

Two things grabbed my attention about this incident.

First, on a personal level, it was right in my old stomping grounds, maybe a hundred yards from my former office. So, do I feel like these crashes are hitting pretty close to home? Yeah. Going through it once was one time too many — no need for a repeat.

Second, and more importantly, the fire department public information officer made a seldom-voiced observation to the news media while he was on scene.

HOW THIS AFFECTS YOU

Vehicles crash into restaurants, stores, salons and other types of businesses all the time, often injuring and sometimes killing customers and employees. I discovered this the hard way when I got hit in 2008.

—Mark Wright

QUICK TIPS

• Business: You and your landlord can protect your employees and customers with proper barriers and other strategies.

• Shopper: Look before you exit. Keep your eye on moving vehicles, especially as they pull in to park.

• Driver: Pay attention. Focus on correct pedal use. Confusing brake & gas pedals is a common cause of storefront crashes.

STOREFRONT CRASH NEWSFEED

Truck Crashes Into Nostrand Avenue
Sheepshead Bites
The driver of a truck that smashed into a vacant storefront on Nostrand Avenue Sunday evening said he swerved to avoid a bicyclist and lost control of his vehicle. “The guy just shot across and I tried to avoid him and the car went out of control ... drunk driver crash ends up in church
Bay News 9
According to Tampa police, 44-year-old Bruce Powers was driving drunk on southbound Florida Avenue when he crossed the center line, crashing into a car in the opposite lanes, pushing that car and his own into the front of the church, which is along the ...

Car slams into Manchester storefront
WMUR Manchester
He said he went to help the driver of the car in the store, but was unable to reach her. “The car was too far in the store,” said Blais. Fortunately, he said he could hear her calling
He said, “There’s not much of a barrier,” as he looked at the vehicle’s path. “There’s a parking space, a little cement, the sidewalk, a grassy area and then the building. It didn’t take much effort to get in there.”

If by some miracle you, dear reader, happen to be a commercial property owner or an architect, please…read his remarks again. Very little stood between a moving vehicle and an innocent receptionist on the other side of a glass window.

I’ll refrain from getting preachy here. Suffice it to say that one of the common elements in most vehicle-into-building crashes (especially those that lead to injuries or deaths) is the lack of any sufficient barrier to protect pedestrians and building occupants from an out-of-control car.

Putting bollards or other appropriate standards-based barriers between people, buildings, and parking spaces is easy. Almost as easy as walking out the door in the morning thinking we’ll be coming back later.

Learn more at the Storefront Safety Council website.
In a highly interactive exclamation point to Real Estate 101’s 2015 event series, Studio Theater was host to “Career Trajectory 101,” in ...

4 weeks ago

Urban Land Institute

Senior Driver in Your Family?

Beyond Driving with Dignity can make the conversation easier.

Search This Blog

Blog Archive

Subscribe via reader

Follow via Google

Join this site

with Google Friend Connect

Members (7)

Already a member? Sign in

© Mark Wright Communications LLC

Simple template. Powered by Blogger.