



Safety Tips for Driving at Night

Although the majority of driving takes place during daylight hours, more accidents occur at night and most fatal accidents happen during the night. The professional driver understands that it takes maximum defensive driving skills to drive safely at night. Add rain to the mix and the risk multiples. Between 12 midnight and 6 a.m. is the riskiest time for crashes, because there are fewer drivers yet more accidents than any other time of the day. Many professional drivers have routes or trips that begin or end in darkness. Safe night driving requires preparation, alertness and a heavy dose of common sense.

What Makes Night Driving Difficult?

- Poor Visibility
- People Feel More Sleepy during darkness than During
- Silence around Makes One Feel More Drowsy
- Roadway Lighting is often very poor
- People Drink Mostly at Night
- Car and Truck Lights coming from the opposite direction hits the eyes of the driver and can lead to an accident do to temporary blindness
- The visually impaired who have problem with their eyesight or suffer from night blindness driving at night is a major challenge

Tips for Safe Driving at Night

- **Condition of Other Drivers.** Late in the evening and during the early morning hours is when you are most likely to meet fatigued or impaired drivers. Be alert for motorists that are driving aggressively or erratically during these times. Maintain a safe distance from these drivers and be prepared to stop. If a vehicle comes into your lane head-on, slow down and move your vehicle as far to the right as you can. Never take evasive action into an oncoming lane of traffic.
- **Reduce Your Speed**
- **Make sure your headlights are properly aimed.** Check with your service provider or maintenance shop for the proper procedure. During your pre and post trip inspections make sure that your lights are operational and clean.
- **Keep your headlights and windshield clean.**



- **Don't overdrive your headlights.** Especially when driving on smaller roads without reflector strips, follow a four-second rule. Take note of where the far reach of your low beams are, then count four seconds. If you pass that original place in less than four seconds, then you are going too fast. Two to three seconds may be an acceptable range for major highways with reflector strips. Remember that posted speed limits are for driving in daylight with dry road conditions.
- **Use high beams wisely.** The use of high-beam headlights when there isn't oncoming traffic can extend the time that you have to react to hazards. Never use your high beams because the high beams of the oncoming car stay on. This will only increase the chances of a head-on crash.
- **Don't look at oncoming headlights.** Focus on the edges of oncoming traffic and bright objects, as staring directly into headlights can blind you for up to five seconds until your eyes adjust.
- **Look around.** Keep your eyes moving from side to side, rather than focusing only on the centerline and the road ahead, to help your eyes stay adjusted to the dark and avoid falling victim to "highway hypnosis," a state in which reaction time is greatly impaired.
- **Wear sunglasses during the day.** Wearing sunglasses during bright days helps keep your eyes more sensitive for driving in the dark.
- **If you're tired, get off the road and sleep.** If you feel sleepy, caffeine can never be a substitute for sleep, nor is loud music or rolling down the windows. Pull over and rest, and stop every two hours for a break out of your vehicle even if you're not feeling sleepy. Don't set out on a trip tired.

