



Tailgate Safety Talk

Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries

More than half the motor vehicle fatalities occur after dark, even though night driving is only one quarter of the time we spend driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says we are three times more likely to be in a fatal crash at night than during the day.

Most auto/animal crashes happen at night too. As the nights get longer in the fall season, we spend more of our driving time in the dark. By the start of winter many of us will be commuting in the dark both morning and night. So let's review some night-driving safety tips:

- Allow yourself more time to get to work. Besides the darkness, there may be the problem of frost to remove from the windshield.
- Check your driving lights and signal lights regularly to make sure they are working. Keep them clear of obstructions..
- Turn your headlights on as soon as the light begins to get dim.
- Use your low beams when you are following another vehicle or when a vehicle approaches from the opposite direction. When you blind the other driver with your high beams, you are endangering yourself.
- Look beyond your own headlights. Use streetlights and the lights of vehicles in front of you to get an idea of what is happening down the road.
- Leave an extra cushion of space around your vehicle at night, to allow more reaction time for yourself and other drivers.
- Impaired drivers are a danger to everyone on the road. Statistics suggest that one out of 13 drivers drives drunk in the early morning hours, so give others plenty of space to maneuver.
- If you have vehicle trouble, pull as far off the road as you can. Warn other drivers with your four-way flashers, headlights, interior lights and flares if you have them.
- Collisions with wildlife can be fatal for automobile occupants. Animals are most likely to be active around roads in the early morning and early evening.
- Observe warnings of animal crossings.
- The references to a deer in the headlights are accurate. Honk instead of flashing your lights if you encounter an animal on the road because the lights may cause the animal to freeze.
- Brake to avoid a crash. Swerving might send your vehicle out of control and the confused animal may just jump in front of your vehicle anyway.

Adjust your driving habits to accommodate the long hours of darkness this time of year. Leave yourself more time to travel, and be alert to dangers on the road.

Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.