

THE MOST DANGEROUS TIME TO DRIVE

As we 'Fall Back' to Shorter Days, Take Extra Care on the Road

Most of us will either drive to work in the dark... or drive home in the dark after work. Shorter days, fatigue, compromised night vision, animals on the road, and impaired drivers all contribute to making driving at night more dangerous than any other time of day. In fact, the risk of a fatal crash is three times greater at night, according to National Safety Council research.

When Daylight Saving Time ends – for 2018, that's 2 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 4 – many people will find themselves spending more time driving in the dark. Depth perception, color recognition and peripheral vision can be compromised in the dark, and the glare of headlights from an oncoming vehicle can temporarily blind a driver.

Even with high-beam headlights on, visibility is limited to about 500 feet (250 feet for normal headlights) creating less time to react to something in the road, especially when driving at higher speeds.

What should you do to combat darkness?

Aim your headlights correctly, and make sure they're clean.

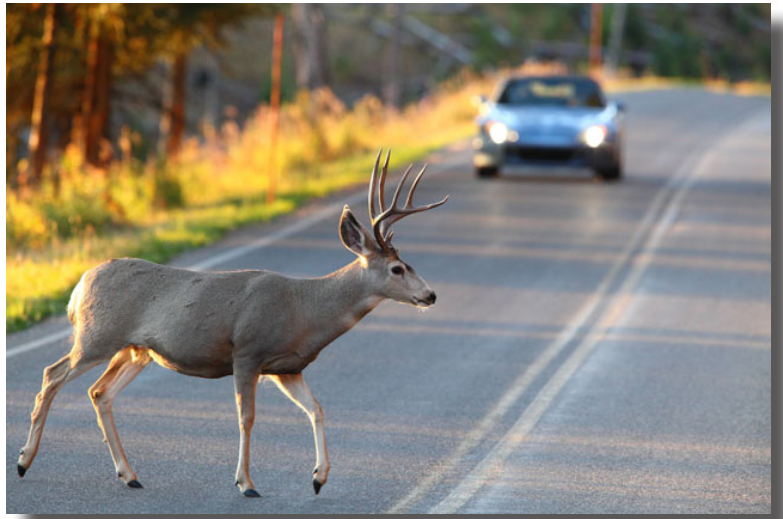
Dim your dashboard.

Look away from oncoming lights.

If you wear glasses, make sure they're anti-reflective.

Clean the windshield to eliminate streaks.

Slow down to compensate for limited visibility and reduced stopping time.



Compromised Night Vision

Night vision is the ability to see well in low-light conditions. As we age, we have greater difficulty seeing at night. A 50-year-old driver may need twice as much light to see as well as a 30-year-old. At age 60 and older, driving can become even more difficult, according to the American Optometric Association. Some older drivers also may have compromised vision due to cataracts and degenerative eye diseases.

Stay Alert, Stay Alive

While we do only one quarter of our driving at night, 50% of traffic deaths happen at night. It doesn't matter whether the road is familiar or not, driving at night is always more dangerous. More than 40,000 people were killed in car crashes in 2016, according to Injury Facts. By taking some extra precautions, we can all contribute to reducing these numbers.

