

SAFETY MEMO

March 29th, 2021 – Low-Light / Night-Time Visibility



Did you know?

Low-Light and Night-Time Visibility

People are often traveling to/from the office in the morning before the sun is over the horizon or at the end of the day after sunset. The timing of this travel has the potential to contribute to vehicle and pedestrian accidents due to low-light and night-time reduced visibility.

Reduced visibility can also be attributed to weather events such as rain, fog, and snow, and it can also be related to physical surroundings like road locations and improper vehicle maintenance.

Studies show that people have lower depth perception, peripheral vision, and lower ability to distinguish colour when driving in low-light or driving at night¹.



Figure 1: Example of Low-Light Driving (Pixabay Photo Credit)

Stay Alert, Stay Safe

According to the American National Safety Council², only one quarter of driving is done at night, yet 50% of traffic deaths happen past dusk. By taking extra precautions before getting behind the wheel, we can all contribute to safe driving habits, and ensure everyone arrives at their destination safely.

Rush Hour

Rush hour generally occurs on weekdays from 6-9 a.m. in the morning and from 4-7 p.m. in the evening. This is a dangerous time to drive due to crowded roadways, with drivers and pedestrians eager to get home. This hazard is increased during the winter months in the northern hemisphere where low-light and night-time visibility is also present during rush hour.

Recommendations

Some tips when driving in the dark:

- Plan your trip ahead of time.
- Ensure headlights are aligned and aimed correctly.
- Dim the dashboard and interior lights.
- Look away from oncoming lights (look up or down, slightly turn your gaze towards the right horizon).
- Clean the windshield to eliminate streaks, bugs, road salt, dirt, and grease.
- Use the night setting on the rearview mirror to minimize glare.
- Slow down to compensate for limited visibility and reduced stopping time.
- If you wear glasses, make sure they are anti-reflective.
- Carry a roadside emergency kit.
- Watch for wildlife.
- Minimize distractions (phone, eating).
- Reduce speed and increase following distance.
- Stay alert, even if the route is familiar to you.
- Limit driving to daytime hours, if necessary.

¹ Think Insurance. 21 Tips for Driving at Night. (Aug 6, 2020). Retrieved from <https://www.thinkinsure.ca/insurance-help-centre/tips-for-driving-at-night.html>

² NSC. The most dangerous time to drive. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.nsc.org/road-safety/safety-topics/night-driving>

