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## FALL DRIVING TIPS

- As summer changes to fall, are you ready for the changing hazards on our roads? Rain, fog, sleet and wet snow require full driver attention. Remember the "three-second rule" when following other drivers, and in severe weather increase your following distance. If you are being tailgated, let the other driver pass.
- Be aware of slippery conditions that occur with frost. At freezing or near-freezing temperatures, wet bridges and overpasses will become icy much more quickly than the roadways that approach them. The roadways hold heat and the bridges do not; you can go from wet roadway to ice in just a fraction of a second.
- Patches of fallen leaves can be just as slippery as patches of ice because the leaves hold in large amounts of water. Drive slowly through them and avoid hard or panic braking.
- Watch for school buses! If a school bus has a stop sign extended and flashing red lights, you must stop at least 20 feet from the bus until the warnings end, regardless of which direction you're traveling. You don't have to stop if the bus is on the opposite side of a separated roadway (median, boulevard, etc.), but be alert for children on foot.
- The sun rises later and sets earlier in the fall, so your commute to and from work may find you driving directly into the sun. Be sure your windows are clean, inside and out, and have sunglasses handy. When you lower your car's shade visor, push the bottom edge away from your face (-don't leave it inches from your nose where it could injure you in a crash!). If you're driving away from a low sun, glare won't be a problem for you, but it can be for the drivers approaching you from the other direction.
- The decreasing daylight also means more driving in twilight or dark conditions. This affects vision, including side (peripheral) vision, and the ability to judge distance and see colors clearly. As we age, our vision typically declines, so older drivers may be even more at risk when driving at night. Also, people of all ages become more relaxed and less alert in the dark, and can more easily become sleepy. However, there are ways to lower the risks of driving in the dark:
  - Prepare your eyes for night driving. When you step out of a brightly lit building into the dark it takes anywhere from two to five minutes for your eyes to begin adjusting to the change and a full 30 minutes to completely adjust. Allow your eyes that little extra time to adjust before driving into the dark.
  - Make sure your headlights, tail lights and turn signals are all working properly. If your headlights aren't automatic, turn them on as soon as the light begins to fade. Always use low beams when traveling in foggy conditions; - the light of



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your high beams will simply be reflected off the moisture in the air right back at you.

- Check the aim of your headlights. Badly aimed headlights reduce the distance you can see and possibly blind oncoming drivers. Check them against a blank, flat surface while parked on a level driveway. If you think your headlights are not aimed properly have them adjusted.
- Finally, always remember the basics: wear a seat belt, drive alert and sober, and drive at safe and legal speed.

**Acknowledgments:**

[National Safety Council](#)

Minnesota Department of Public Safety



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