

## For Your Safety: Driving After Dark

**Hey! Where did the sunlight go?** It's that time of year again when the amount of daylight is getting less and less. Even rolling back the clock puts most of us in the dark for our ride to and from work. For many truck drivers you'll still be on the road long after sunset. That makes your job even more dangerous.

According to the National Safety Council, traffic death rates are three times higher at night than during the day. One reason is the darkness itself—90 percent of a driver's reaction depends on vision. When the sun goes down, vision, depth perception, color recognition, and peripheral vision are all compromised.

Another dangerous factor is fatigue. The body reacts to darkness as a time to rest so you may become increasingly tired toward the end of your route.

There are several things you can do to minimize the risks of driving after dark.

- Prepare your vehicle for driving after dark. Clean headlights, taillights, signals, and windows before hitting the road.
- Have your headlights properly aimed. Misaimed headlights blind other drivers and reduce your ability to see the road.
- Avoid smoking while driving. Smoke's nicotine and carbon monoxide hamper night vision.
- Reduce your speed and increase your following distance behind other cars.
- Don't overdrive your headlights. You should be able to stop in the illuminated area.
- Have an eye exam. Another year has passed and it may be more of a challenge to see well at night.

The last suggestion is to be on the lookout for the other driver. You are sharing the road with folks who may have impaired night vision, fatigue and poorly adjusted headlights. Be prepared to compensate for their driving errors.

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