



Bakersfield Composite Squadron #121

60-Second Safety Advisor #46

Driving at Night

According to the National Safety Council, traffic death rates are three times greater at night than during the day. Why is night driving so dangerous? One obvious answer is darkness. Ninety percent of a driver's reaction depends on vision, and vision is severely limited at night. Depth perception, color recognition, and peripheral vision are compromised after sundown. Fatigue is another major factor. Drowsiness makes driving more difficult by dulling concentration and slowing reaction time. And, alcohol is another leading factor. Not only does alcohol severely impair your driving ability, it also acts as a depressant. Just one drink can induce fatigue.

Fortunately, you can take several effective measures to minimize these after-dark dangers. Prepare your car for night driving; keep headlights, tail lights, signal lights and windows (inside and out) clean, and have your headlights properly aimed. Don't drink and drive. Avoid smoking when you drive, smoke's nicotine and carbon monoxide hamper night vision. If there is any doubt, turn your headlights on, being seen is as important as seeing. You should also reduce your speed and increase your following distances and don't overdrive your headlights, you should be able to stop inside the illuminated area. It may also help to make frequent stops for light snacks and exercise. And lastly, if you're too tired to drive, stop and get rest. Don't take unnecessary risk!

