



# Advice on How to Drive Safely in the Fall

## Fall weather can be unpredictable. Prepare yourself and your vehicle for wet leaves, fog and more.

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Each year, the transition from summer to autumn brings the much-anticipated return of **colorful foliage**, **sweater weather**, football season and all things pumpkin. However, the beginning of fall also comes with potential driving risks, including slippery roads, decreased daylight, fog and sun glare. Autumn weather can be unpredictable and conditions can change drastically within a matter of minutes.

Prepare yourself and your vehicle for the changing seasons with the following tips to help you drive safely in the fall.

**How to Drive Safely in Darkness** - As the days get shorter, you will likely be driving in the dark a lot more.

- Be sure to keep your headlights clean and in proper working order; dim or misaligned headlights can decrease your visibility.
- Always watch for pedestrians walking, jogging or biking through the streets; they may be difficult to see at night if they are wearing dark clothing.
- Be mindful of children walking to and from bus stops in the morning and afternoon.
- Fall is also an active breeding time for deer, so travel slowly if you live in a deer-laden area. If you see a deer cross the roadway, expect others to follow, as they often travel in groups.

### Cold Weather

- Fall weather can change rapidly from warm to cold, causing roads to ice over overnight. Drive slowly and brake gently when driving across overpasses and bridges, as these surfaces tend to frost over before others. Be aware of spots where **black ice** forms on the roadway and drive carefully through these areas.
- Check your tire pressure daily. Extreme changes in temperature will cause your tires to expand and contract, which may lead to a loss of tire pressure. Before starting your vehicle, clear away any frost on your windows and **check that your tires** are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.

**Driving in Fog** With cold autumn mornings often comes fog.

- When driving in foggy weather, set your headlights to low instead of high. High-beam headlights bounce off of fog and reflect back at you, further impairing your ability to see the road. Low beams, however, aim down toward the roadway and improve your visibility.
- Slow down and leave plenty of space between you and the car in front of you so that you have ample time to stop if necessary.

**Glare** Autumn's sunrises and sunsets can cause a large amount of glare, making it difficult to see other vehicles, pedestrians, traffic lights or the roadway.

- To combat glare, clean your windshield inside and out to remove any dust particles, streaks or smudges. These can become magnified when illuminated by sunlight and impact your visibility.
- Avoid using washing and waxing products that increase your car's shine. These products magnify the sun's glare on your car, which may cause the light to reflect into your eyes and blind you for a few seconds.
- Keep a **pair of sunglasses** in your vehicle at all times to protect your eyes from the sun's rays. If you frequently drive at night, consider purchasing lenses with anti-reflective coating in order to reduce glare from streetlights and headlights.

**Wet Conditions** Fall is notorious for wet weather. Wet leaves pose a serious risk to motorists since driving on them is like driving on ice.

- Before starting your car, remove any leaves from your windshield to prevent them from getting stuck under your wiper blades. Also, be sure to replace windshield wiper blades if they show any signs of wear. Neglecting your wipers can limit your vision during poor weather conditions and leave you in a dangerous situation.
- When driving during heavy rain, slow down, especially around turns. Wet conditions increase the time it takes your vehicle to come to a complete stop, so keep a good distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Avoid sudden movements with the steering wheel or slamming on the brake pedal, as these actions may cause your car to hydroplane. If you feel that you are losing control of your vehicle, steer straight and gently release the gas pedal until you feel the tires make contact with the road surface again.

**Other ways to drive safely in the fall**

- Never park your vehicle over a pile of leaves. Doing so may cause a fire to start from your vehicle's exhaust system or catalytic converter.
- Never drive over a pile of leaves; small children often play in leaf piles.
- Changing temperatures and weather conditions create potholes, and leaves on the roadway may make it difficult to see them. Always be sure to slow down and avoid driving over leaf-covered areas, if possible.