

By: Dan Baldyga

While on a trip, or even close to home, we all want to keep driving for as long as possible. Yet nobody, in their right mind, wants to be a threat to ourselves (or others) because we're too sleepy to operate our motor vehicle.

Self-awareness of our sleepiness is always the key to driving safely!

In a report dated just last year 2004, the National Safety Council wrote that traffic death rates are 3 times greater at night - than during the day! This report also stated, "Driving at night is more of a challenge than most people think and it's much more dangerous".

So, you may ask, "What is it that makes night driving so dangerous"?

The NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL'S answer to that one is as follows, DEALING WITH THE DARKNESS IS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK. 90% of a driver's reaction depends upon vision and that is severely limited at night. Depth perception, color recognition plus peripheral vision are compromised after sundown .

PLUS: Another huge factor, as stated by the NSC (which adds to even more danger when you're night driving) is fatigue. Day or night drowsiness will always make one's driving more difficult because it dulls concentration and it surely slows reaction time.

**IN ORDER TO PROPERLY HANDLE THE ABOVE FACTORS
THE FOLLOWING IS RECOMMENDED**

#1. You must observe night driving safety as soon as the sun goes down. Twilight is one of the most difficult times to drive because your eyes are constantly changing to the growing darkness.

#2. YES, it's a "Time Consuming Headache" - - HOWEVER: You should prepare your car for night driving. Clean headlights, tail lights, signal lights and windows (inside and out) at least once a week and even more often if necessary.

You must do this - - especially if you're on a long trip!

#3. Your headlights must be properly aimed. Headlights can blind other drivers and they also reduce your ability to see the road.

#4. If you have any doubt at all you should turn your headlights on. Under normal circumstances lights will most likely not help you see in early twilight but they'll always make it easier for other drivers to see you. Being seen as is important as seeing.

#5. Reduce your speed and increase your following distances. It's much more difficult to judge other vehicle's speeds and distances at night.

#6. When following another motor vehicle (be it a car, truck or whatever) you must keep your headlights on low beam so as not to blind the driver ahead of you.

#7. If an oncoming vehicle doesn't click from high to low, you can avoid the glare by watching the right edge of the road and using it as a steering guide.

#8. Make frequent stops for light snacks and exercise. If you're too tired to drive, stop and get some rest.

#9. If you have car trouble, pull off the road as far as possible. If you have what are identified as "Reflecting Triangles" you should warn approaching traffic by setting them up near your vehicle and about 300 feet behind it.

PLUS: Whether you have reflecting triangles or not you should: A: Turn on your flashers plus your dome light. B: Get your body off the roadway. C: Remove both yourself and your passengers away from the area.

In 2004 NHTSA (The U.S. National Highway Traffic Association Administration) estimates that approximately 100,000 police-reported crashes involved drowsiness and fatigue as a principal casual factor. In their report they stated, "About one million crashes per year were thought to be produced by Drowsy Drivers".

In a poll NHTSA ran in 1999, 62% of all adults surveyed reported driving a car (or some other vehicle the previous year) while feeling Drowsy 27 said that they had, at some time, dozed off while driving and 23% of them said they knew who had experience a fall-asleep crash.

This report also said, "People tend to fall asleep more on high-speed, long, boring, rural highways".

And that "The New York Police estimated that 30% of all fatal crashes, along the New York Thruway, occurred because the driver fell asleep".

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Dan Baldyga's third and latest book AUTO ACCIDENT PERSONAL INJURY INSURANCE CLAIM (How To Evaluate And Settle Your Loss) can be found on the internet at <http://www.caraccidentclaims.com> or

<http://www.autoaccidentclaims.com>. This book reveals "How To" successfully handle your motor vehicle accident claim so you won't be taken advantage of. It also goes into detail regarding BASE (The Baldyga Auto Accident Settlement Evaluation Formula). THE BASE FORMULA explains how to determine the value of the "Pain and Suffering" you endured - - because of your personal injury!

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