



Follow These Bright Ideas when Driving at Night

(515 words)

(ARA) – The number of people killed in traffic accidents is three times higher at night than during the day; and according to the National Safety Council there's a good explanation for that statistic. Ninety percent of a driver's reaction depends on vision, and vision is severely limited at night.

"A driver's depth perception, color recognition and peripheral vision are compromised after sundown; and when you look into the headlights of an oncoming car, you may even be blinded by the glare for a couple of seconds, which can be dangerous," says Crystal Reynolds Longest of Wagner Lighting Products, which has been in the automotive lighting business for decades.

Drivers have been complaining about glare ever since electric headlights began replacing oil lamps in automobiles more than 85 years ago. Recently, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has received thousands of consumer complaints about the glare caused by high-intensity discharge (HID) headlamps, which are now installed at the factory in a growing number of vehicles.

Recognizing the need for change, Wagner developed an alternative. TruView headlamps hit the market in September 2003. "Our engineers figured out a way to filter out yellow rays within the lamp's projected color spectrum, and the end result is a truer, whiter light that offers exceptional visibility in nighttime driving conditions. TruView lamps do not create the distracting bluish-white glare commonly associated with HID headlamps," says Longest.

Another benefit offered by the TruView lights is that they illuminate not just what's in front of them, but the entire roadway.

Replacing your headlights can make a big difference in the quality of your night vision, but that's not the only way you can improve it. Here are some other simple steps recommended by the National Safety Council.

- * Prepare your car for night driving by cleaning headlights, taillights, signals and windows. Even a thin layer of road grime on the lens can block up to 90 percent of the light and severely restrict your ability to see at night.
- * Make sure your headlights are properly aimed. Misaimed headlights reduce your ability to see the road and blind other drivers.
- * Avoid smoking when you drive. Smoke's nicotine and carbon monoxide hamper night vision.
- * Reduce your speed and increase your following distance. It is more difficult to judge other vehicles' speeds and distances at night.



Follow These Bright Ideas when Driving

* Don't "overdrive" your headlights. You should be able to stop inside the illuminated area. If you are not, you're creating a blind crash area in front of your vehicle.

If you're still uncomfortable driving at night after doing all the things the Safety Council recommends, make an appointment with your eye doctor. The American Optometric Association recommends that everyone under the age of 40 have a thorough eye exam at least once every three years; drivers 41 to 60, every two years; and drivers over the age of 60, every year. Age makes eyes more sensitive to glare.

For more information about Wagner TruView headlamps, log onto www.federal-mogul.com, or inquire at your local retail auto parts store or repair shop.

Courtesy of ARA Content

Vocabulary

- 1. aimed: _____
- 2. blinded: _____
- 3. depth: _____
- 4. glare: _____
- 5. headlamps: _____
- 6. road grime: _____
- 7. taillights: _____
- 8. thorough: _____

Questions

- 1. Do you have to wear glasses to drive?
- 2. Do you drive at night?
- 3. Does it bother you to drive at night?
- 4. Have you ever been in an accident?
- 5. Do you drive often?
- 6. Are you scared to drive?
- 7. Describe some situations that you didn't like while you were driving.
- 8. Do you use your cell phone while you drive?
- 9. Do you eat or drink in your car?
- 10. Do you wear your seatbelt?
- 11. Do you always use your blinker before turning a corner?
- 12. How fast do you drive?
- 13. On the highway, or on any other street, are you the type of person who "tailgates"?
- 14. Are you a polite driver?
- 15. Do you consider yourself a good driver?
- 16. Are you scared when you are the passenger of a car?
- 17. What annoys you the most on the road?
- 18. At what age should teens be able to get their permit?
- 19. What's the longest distance you ever drove?
- 20. How did it go?