Headlights To See And Be Seen



Safety Talk

Vehicle headlights have two important functions. They let you see what’s ahead as you drive, and they allow others to see your vehicle.

Your headlights are especially important for safe travel during the winter. In addition to the long hours of darkness, weather conditions such as fog, snow, sleet and rain reduce the ability to see and to be seen.

So maintaining your headlights is an important part of safe night driving.

- Clean headlights help you see better. You should wipe them when you wash your vehicle windows. Doing these tasks each time you fill up with fuel can help keep windshields and headlights free of dirt and dust.
- When the weather gets heavy, your headlights and tail lights can become obstructed with snow, frost or mud. Check them before you start out, and as necessary while you are enroute. If you are slowed or stalled in a storm, it is vital that other drivers see your lights and your emergency flashers.
- Headlights should be aimed properly. Driving over rough surfaces or through potholes can throw them out of correct alignment. Ask the service person to check and, if necessary, adjust your headlights each time you are in the shop for routine maintenance. Be aware of how your headlights are positioned as you drive too. A beam which lights more of the curb than the road in front of you needs to be adjusted. At night when you pull up to a building, such as your house or workplace, you can check to see if both lights are aimed the way they should be.
  Keep headlights free of other defects such as chips and scratches in the glass or condensation from a poorly sealed unit.
- Make a circle check of your vehicle before starting out. Look for any obstructions, and make sure the headlights, tail lights and signal lights are all working properly. Have bulbs replaced promptly. Carry spare bulbs in your vehicle.
- Consider using headlights during the daytime, whether or not it is mandatory in your area to do so. Daytime lights help other drivers see you – before they pass in an oncoming lane or turn in front of you. As more vehicles have their lights on in the daytime, it becomes easier to miss seeing vehicles without lights. Many companies with vehicle fleets have policies requiring headlights to be on both day and night. If this is the case with your company, be sure to comply.
- If you are not satisfied with the lights the manufacturer gave you, consider a retrofit for safety. After-market daytime running lights are available. A high-

mounted brake light in the rear of an automobile is another retrofit you might consider in an older vehicle.

- Better headlights can increase your ability to see and be seen by other drivers – unless the lights are blindingly bright compared to other vehicles. And on that topic, don’t forget to dim your high beams when you meet oncoming traffic.