

SafeDriver Monthly Newsletter

October 2023



Prep for the Fall Roads Ahead

There is a lot to love about Fall. The cooler weather, the changing of the leaves, carving pumpkins, apple cider, Gilmore Girls on repeat, and the excitement of the holiday seasons approaching us. With the change of the season, comes a change in our roadway conditions. Multiple factors come into play while we embark on a journey into Fall. Back to School, fallen leaves, misty rain, and foggy weather are just a few factors at the top of the list. In many ways, despite the beautiful colors, it might feel like Fall is out to get us, but don't worry, we have a few tips to help you safely cruise through the next few months.

While on your morning commute, you might have noticed a fluctuation of children walking on your neighborhood sidewalks. Do not be alarmed, it is not a tiny army of humans, it is just back-to-school time. Children going back to school creates added road and foot traffic in your neighborhoods. Be mindful of pedestrians crossing the road and your local school speed zones. You might encounter a few school buses on your morning commute, if you do, be mindful of frequent stops and be aware of children entering and exiting the bus.

Although we love to look at the leaves changing colors and immerse ourselves in the dramatic views of fall, it is important to pay attention to the roadways and the dangers fallen leaves can cause. Soggy leaves can be slippery, causing our vehicles to lose traction on wet roadways. If you find yourself on a roadway covered in fallen leaves, tread carefully and proceed with caution. Be mindful of your vehicle's speed while changing lanes and driving around sharp bends in the road. Do not brake harshly on roadways covered in leaves and give yourself plenty of time to come to a complete stop.

It is no surprise that fall weather brings rainy, gloomy days. While we might prefer to stay indoors on a rainy day and enjoy a book, a hot cup of tea or coffee, or a show on Netflix, sometimes obligation calls and we have to leave our home. Even if it is slightly raining, be sure to turn your lights on so your fellow drivers are aware of your presence. When coming to a stop at a stop sign or a red light, give yourself plenty of space to fully stop your vehicle. Wet roadways do not mix well with quick, sudden stops. Giving yourself plenty of time to stop can help avoid an accident.

Foggy weather is a staple of Fall. Warm air pushing into cooler surroundings can cause fog to come into your area. If you find yourself having to drive into foggy weather, make sure to turn on your low-beam headlights. By turning on your low beams, you are making yourself more visible to fellow drivers on the road. And just like we would do if we find ourselves driving in the rain, we give space and distance between the car in front of us.

Four Safety Tips to Keep You Safe While Driving This Fall

Slow down! It is always best to go the speed limit. While we might be in a hurry, and try to rush to our next destination, it is always important to follow the speed limits in your area. Arriving safely at your destination is a top priority. Following speed limits is a sure way to get there safely. Look for changes in speed limits due to construction or school zones.

Scan ahead! October through January is the peak season for vehicle collisions with wildlife. While driving, we sometimes can see wildlife on the side of the road. If you see yourself approaching an animal, slow down. Animals tend to dart when scared and can run out into the road. If this happens, brake, don't swerve. Swerving your vehicle can make the situation much worse. Some animals are unpredictable and swerving could put you right into their changed path.

Stay focused! We use our phones for pretty much everything, like playing music, getting directions, or answering phone calls. While these are all great things, it is not so great to do these things while driving. If you like to listen to music during your car ride, set up your playlist before you take off. Pull up your directions before you leave. Cell phones can be a huge distraction. By setting your phone to "do not disturb" while driving, you eliminate the temptation to check your phone.

Safety first! We have prepared ourselves for fall, now it's time to make sure our car is ready for fall. Check your tire pressure. Tires lose pressure with each ten-degree drop. Replace old windshield wipers. Check your headlights. If your vehicle's headlights are too dim, it can make it hard for other drivers to see you, and for you to safely see your surroundings at night. Check to make sure your defrosters work. Driving with foggy windows is an accident waiting to happen.

Slow Down. Scan Ahead. Stay focused. Safety First.

