

Safe Driving Teen Monthly Bulletin

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Are you overdriving your headlights?



Overdriving your headlights means driving too fast to be able to stop in the distance lit by your headlights. Automobile headlights are only effective for a certain distance. On average, with low beam headlights, you can only spot objects in the road for a distance of

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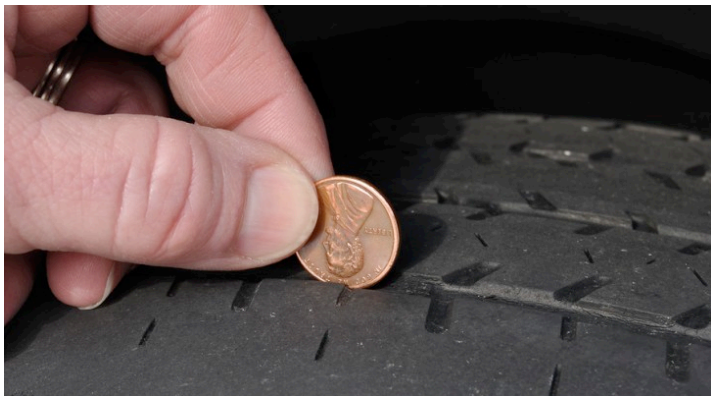
about 160 feet in front of your vehicle. With high beams, you can see about 450 feet ahead. Those distances don't take into account the age, visual abilities of the driver, or road conditions. Your headlights can't light objects over hills, around curves, or dips in the road and they're even less effective in rain, fog or snow.

Let's say you're driving at 40 mph on a dark road using your low beam headlights when you see an object in the road ahead. On average, once you see the object ahead, it will take you 1.5 seconds to fully react and hit the brakes. Once you hit the brakes, it will still take time for the vehicle to come to a complete stop. At 40 mph, it takes approximately 189 feet to bring a car to a complete stop. Remember that your headlights only allow you to see 160 feet ahead so, at 40 mph, you won't be able to stop in time to avoid hitting the object in the road.

When driving on a dark road, it's best to use your high beam headlights but the law requires you to dim your headlights within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle. When driving in rain or snow and especially in fog, it's best to use your low beam headlights. In foggy conditions, your high beams will only reflect back off of the fog and make it even more difficult to see ahead.

Source: <http://www.lowestpricetrafficschool.com> ♦

Teens Don't Know How to Check Tires



Almost half of teen drivers in the US don't know how to check their tires for wear or proper pressure. Results from a study conducted by Michelin North America showed that teens aren't getting basic vehicle maintenance training in state driver training courses or from their parents. Basic maintenance checks on tires, windshield wipers, fluid levels, and lights are an important part of driving safety yet the study shows that:

- 27% of teens never check the condition of their tires.
- 44% of teens don't know how to check the tire tread for wear.
- 29% don't know how to check the oil.
- 57% don't know how to change the windshield wipers.

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According to the study, only six states require some basic tire maintenance as part of their driver education program.

Along with teaching their teens the rules of the road, parents need to devote time in teaching the teen how to check for tread wear and tire pressure. Time also needs to be devoted to teaching their teen what to do if dashboard-warning lights illuminate or if there is an engine overheat indication. Teens, especially girls who are most vulnerable if their vehicle is disabled, need to know how to change a tire or at least have a number to a roadside repair service programmed into their phone.

As part of their program Beyond The Driving Test, Michelin has created YouTube videos and a glove box guide to aid drivers in performing simple maintenance checks. Read more: [Beyond The Driving Test](#)

Is it safe to drive with one hand?



I will say that it's only safe to drive temporarily with one hand but not all the time. If you need to adjust a control such as the air conditioner or windshield wipers or to pick up something one hand on the wheel is fine. However, you shouldn't get in the habit of driving with one hand all the time. Driving with one hand doesn't give you full control over steering and it could hurt you very badly in certain circumstances. Let's look at a couple of the ways that driving with one hand could be dangerous.

Driving distractions can be even more dangerous when

driving with one hand. Most people tend to put their hand at the top of the steering wheel. If you were to turn your body to look for or to reach for something, you may inadvertently pull the wheel in the direction your body is turning. If that happens while your eyes are off the road, you could drive over into the other lane or off the side of the road.

If you were suddenly involved in a traffic crash in which your airbag deployed, with one hand positioned at the top of the wheel, your hand and arm are going to be driven back into your face at 200 mph. It could break your arm and it isn't going to do wonders for your face either.

Older drivers were taught to always keep their hands at the 9 or 10 o'clock and 3 or 2 o'clock positions on the steering wheel. Today, because of airbags, safety experts suggest keeping your hands lower on the wheel at the 8 and 4 o'clock positions. Don't wrap your thumbs around the wheel. Instead, rest your thumbs on top of the wheel. With your hands and thumbs in this position, you'll have more control and you're less likely to be injured if your airbag deploys.

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Parents May Be Distracting Their Teen Drivers

Parents may be distracting their teen drivers by calling to check up on them. According to research presented at the American Psychological Association's annual convention, more than half of teens responding to a survey said they were on the phone with a parent while driving.

According to the teens, the parents were checking on their whereabouts and expected the teen to answer the phone. If the teen didn't answer, the parent kept calling until they did.

It's understandable that a parent would want to stay in contact and would worry if their child failed to answer the phone but parents should understand the dangers of using a phone while driving and set up rules for the teen to check in without having to use the phone while driving.

Rules may include:

- Checking in at certain times.
- If a call is missed, pull over and call back as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Set up different ring tones so that the teen knows which parent is calling without having to answer.
- Set a reasonable time limit for the teen to pull off the road and answer the call.

There are also apps that can be loaded onto your phone to notify your parents of your whereabouts and other devices that can be placed in the car for real time tracking. Read more: [Teens' distracted driving often caused by parents](#) ♦

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