

Nighttime can leave drivers in dark

Shining headlights critical in protecting teen motorists

Night-driving conditions often can be challenging. Dark roads make it difficult to see on-coming vehicles and could lead to an accident if drivers aren't paying attention.

This especially is true for teenage drivers. The National Safety Council reports that teen-driver deaths are three times greater at night. Visibility is a leading factor and parents should work diligently to make sure their young motorists have ample opportunities to drive at night with a responsible adult.

Teaching young drivers the importance of a vehicle's lighting is a vital safety lesson. Sylvania Automotive, a global leader in automotive lighting, and AAA offer the following suggestions to help teens, parents and guardians better prepare for driving at night and improve vehicle safety:

- Be sure all vehicle lights are working. Have a person turn on its headlights and signal lights while the teen inspects it from the outside.
- Wash headlight lenses when washing the windshield. It enables better road vision at night and in poor-weather conditions. Consider a headlight-restoration kit if the lenses are cloudy. The kit restores



NIGHT RANGER – Taking care of your headlights could be the difference between safe driving and getting into an accident. *Image: Travel_Master. Adobe Stock.*

- them to like-new condition.
- Park on a level surface five feet from a building's wall or garage door before turning on the headlights to make sure they are in good working order. Bright, white circles of light mean they are in good condition. Yellow or dim lights should be replaced.
- Replace headlights before they burn out. Headlight bulbs tend to dim as much as 20% within two years, making it wise to inspect them annually. Dimming creates less light on roads. Consider upgrading to high-performance halogen lighting. The bulbs are as much

as 50% brighter than worn standard bulbs and increase roadway visibility by as much as 40%.

- Always change headlights in pairs. A new bulb paired with an old one creates an uneven field of vision for drivers, which can be a major distraction.
- Check the headlight alignment. Misaligned headlights can become distracting and dangerous. Headlights pointing as little as 1 degree too high can make a significant difference to oncoming drivers. Studies prove nearly half the vehicles in states that require inspections had at least one improperly aimed headlight. Ask a technician to check and correct the aim.
- Drive with the lights on. Turn on the headlights to be seen by other drivers if daytime visibility is limited.
- Reduce the brightness of the instrument-panel light to a comfortable – yet effective level – to reduce unnecessary glare.

It's essential to follow these steps to keep not just teens safe, but all motorists. It's difficult to remain comfortable behind the wheel if you're left in the dark.

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