



Providers of Commute Options
for Middle Tennessee

NOVEMBER 2007
Volume 2, Issue 8



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Driving at Dusk and in the Dark

Did you know that half of all drivers report compromised vision when they are behind the wheel after dark? Considering that vision accounts for 85-90 percent of the information drivers need to be safe on the road, especially at night, the Vision Council of America (VCA) encourages everyone to take steps to increase driver safety.

As the weather begins to change, glare and reflection from bright sunshine, oncoming headlights, snow



or nighttime traffic become increasingly hazardous. Driving at dusk can be particularly challenging because our eyes are constantly adjusting to the changing level of light, causing reduced vision and eye strain.

A study conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) found that more

than half of all drivers experience noticeable glare when driving at night, and a third of all drivers describe this glare to be "disturbing."

The good news is that with regular eye exams you can make sure your vision isn't putting you at risk on the roads. Wearing the proper corrective lenses at night can help improve your vision; and measures like anti-reflective lenses can make your prescription glasses even more effective by eliminating lens glare while driving.

Research shows that older drivers may have an even harder time seeing in poor light. In fact, a 60-year-old requires 10 times as much light to see clearly as a 19-year-old.

To improve driver safety, VCA offers the following tips for enhancing night vision and reducing glare:

*If you wear prescription glasses, wear them and make sure they are clean.

*When driving at dusk, turn on your headlights.

*Perform regular maintenance on your vehicle to ensure headlights are

working and windshields and mirrors are clean.

*Get regular comprehensive eye exams from an eye care professional. Many serious and progressive eye diseases do not have noticeable symptoms.

-Vision Council of America

REPORT ACCIDENT CLAIMS IMMEDIATELY TO:

First Horizon Insurance Group
615-385-8341
(Kay Biggs)
-and-
MiMi Lee
615-790-4005 or
After Hours:
615-517-6321

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For more information about our services contact:
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NEW Vanpool Forming!

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IN THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON, WE EXTEND A HEARTFELT THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS AND WISH YOU A BEAUTIFUL THANKSGIVING.

DEFENSIVE ROAD RULES

Welcome to "Road Rules" *Van Voices* segment which addresses defensive driving practices that every driver and passenger should know.

DON'T SPEED!

Driving at a higher than reasonable speed increases your risk in two ways: it cuts your reaction time and results in more "stored" energy (that must be dissipated in any collision). You should consider if the risks are worth the gain.

This is the science of math and physics—you cannot bend these rules. Each incremental increase in speed reduces your ability to react in time to hazards, because you may be covering distance in less time than it takes to react. Normal reaction time is between .75 second and 1.5 seconds, on average. Average reaction time distance at 50 mph would be approximately 83 feet. At 70 mph, it is over 115 feet (over 7 modern car lengths). These numbers do not include braking distance, just reaction time. The average difference in reaction-time distance from 50 mph to 70 mph is about 32 feet. If you were relying solely on braking, any hazard you encounter within the reaction distance is already a problem; you can't react quickly enough to miss it. This is particularly important at night, when darkness restricts your visibility. Do you know at what distance your headlights will illuminate a hazard? How is your night vision these days? When headlights finally light up a road hazard, it is often too late to avoid it. Many experts would tell you that even 50 mph is too fast for conditions at night, on any dark roadway.



If you could choose the speed at which to hit a brick wall, assuming that it was a sure thing you were going to hit one, would you choose to hit the wall at 10 mph or at 100 mph? Not hard to decide, is it? Higher speeds also bring addi-

YOU NEED TO KNOW GLENDA!

In 1996, Glenda St. Cyr Griggs began working for the Regional Transportation Authority as the Rideshare Director. She is responsible for vanpools, carpools and the Relax & Ride bus service in the nine counties RTA serves. Glenda enjoys helping commuters find a Relax & Ride way to work. Presentations are made to employers and their employees to discuss ridesharing options. Glenda has also used vanpooling for her own transportation to work for over 11 years and assists as the back-up driver when needed. Glenda can be reached at: 615-862-8833.



tional accumulated, or stored energy. More stored energy means increased crash forces if you hit something. Here's a real-world example; a loaded semi traveling at 60 mph develops about 6.5 MILLION foot-pounds of force. Or, your body, unrestrained in the vehicle, could hit the windshield with about 16,000 foot-pounds of force, should your vehicle hit some immovable object - like a tree.

A defensive driver chooses a speed matching traffic as closely as possible without exceeding speed limits. If traffic is moving at higher speed than you should go, keep to the right and out of the way. This is often a legal requirement as well, if you are traveling at a speed less than the flow of traffic. Also, don't neglect to maintain the correct following distance.

Consider that speeding often doesn't save much time. How many times have you reached a red light, only to find a "jackrabbit" waiting there that passed you a half mile back like you were standing still? Ever wonder why? Around most urban areas, signals limit overall speeds to what the system can handle (in terms of numbers of vehicles). On an Interstate, where you truly can save some time by speeding (provided you don't get pulled over), the difference between 65 mph and 80 mph over 50 miles is only 8.7 minutes. *Amazing!*

+++++

-Road Trip America

SPEAKING OF SPEEDING...

We have received several complaints about speeding vans that belong to our vanpool program. Speeding in a TMA or RTA van is unacceptable! Repeated violations can result in the loss of the van. Remember: all drivers must drive our vans safely!



ITEMS OF NOTE:

- ◆ **Mobility Checks** — to help keep our books in order, please send in only one month's payment of mobility checks at a time.
- ◆ **Moving of Vans** — the shuffling, moving of and removing of vans is to be done only by authorized TMA and RTA staff. Drivers or back-up drivers are not to move vans or switch vans without prior permission of TMA and/or RTA staff.

