

TOOLBOX TALK #2

DRIVING IN THE DARK



You may not know the name for it, but if you drive at night, you've probably experienced situational night blindness. It can occur when you are temporarily blinded by a bright light such as an oncoming car's headlights.

When you are momentarily blinded by a bright light, your pupil's contract and adjust to the sudden light intensification. Then when the light passes, your pupils readjust to

the subsequent lower light level by dilating.

The issue? During the brief time your eyes are making these adjustments, your vision is impaired. Without enough light, we lose much of our contrast sensitivity (the ability to distinguish objects from the background) and peripheral vision (the ability to recognize objects at the edges of our visual field).

To help you navigate nighttime driving, here are some tips:

- Drive within the visual range illuminated by your headlights, not by what you think you see beyond them. At night, headlights limit our view to only 250 to 350 feet of the road ahead.
- Adjust your rearview mirror to the nighttime setting to dim any headlight glare coming from behind.
- Focus your eyes on the right edge of the road to avoid being blinded.
- Keep your windshield and headlights clean inside and out.
- Shift your view between the road and your vehicle's rear and side mirrors.
- Turn your head from side to side to increase your peripheral vision.
- Use high beams when you can.