

# TIME TO DISCUSS AUTUMN DRIVING HAZARDS

Fall is quickly approaching, and with it comes seasonal hazards that can lead to animal strikes, loss of control crashes, and other losses. Dispatchers, driver managers, and safety personnel should be communicating these hazards to drivers on a regular basis during the fall months. Please take time to review the list of driving hazards below, and make it a point to discuss these seasonal risks with drivers. Also, complete the “Call to Action” items below to help prevent potential vehicle crashes.

## SLIPPERY ROAD CONDITIONS

When moisture from rain and dew mixes with oil and dust on the road, the surface becomes slippery, and traction decreases. Likewise, leaves falling on the road, especially if wet, create adverse road conditions. Remind drivers to observe the proper speed for conditions.

## FIRST FREEZE

Colder temperatures bring frost and ice, even black ice. Remind drivers to be cautious when driving on bridges and overpasses because they will freeze before the roadway. Also, drivers should budget enough time for a proper pre-trip inspection to ensure there is sufficient tire tread depth, properly defrosted windows, and clean mirrors.

## BACK TO SCHOOL

Autumn means back-to-school time for most children. Remind drivers to expect traffic congestion along bus routes, reduced speed limits in school zones, and increased risk of pedestrians on or near the roadway. Drivers should be extra vigilant, slow down, and be prepared to stop suddenly.

## SUN GLARE

During sunrise and sunset, it can be difficult to see traffic lights or even the vehicle in front of the truck due to sun glare. Remind drivers to slow down, allow proper following distance, and wear sunglasses to reduce glare. If possible, encourage drivers not to drive during these times of the day or to plan breaks until the hazard is gone.

## FATIGUE

Shorter days and daylight savings time can disrupt sleep patterns. Remind drivers to get plenty of rest and avoid heavy meals loaded with carbohydrates and sugary, caffeinated drinks, such as soda. Most crashes occur in the early morning hours and right after lunch.

## ROAD OBSTACLES

This time of year brings unique road obstacles, such as slow-moving, less-conspicuous vehicles, like farm equipment. Remind drivers to be patient around farm vehicles and not to pass unless it is safe and legal to do so. Likewise, drivers should be on the lookout for warning signs and other evidence of animals crossing, and slow down and stay in one lane to avoid a loss of control crash.

## CALL TO ACTION

- Conduct random vehicle inspections each day with drivers to reinforce proper procedures are being followed.
- When possible, allow drivers to schedule non-driving time to avoid periods of increased sun glare.
- Provide healthy snacks in the driver room to help boost driver health and wellness.