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Summer Driving...The Challenges of the Season

Often, when we think of adverse driving conditions we think of snow, sleet, ice, and high winds. Though professional drivers do not deal with these types of conditions during the summer, there are a whole different set of issues that they face during the warmer months of the year.

Vacationing drivers

Summer means sun, fun, and for many Americans that one a year family vacation/road trip. Though a professional driver shares the road with four-wheelers on a continual basis summertime brings out a different set of hazards and concerns that require a driver to pay even more attention than usual and use all of his/her defensive driving skills.



The over-packed vehicle. We've all seen it—the boxes, coolers, and clothes covering a vehicle's back window and in some cases side windows as well. Assume the driver of this vehicle is unable to see out that back and/or side window. Leave plenty of following distance and pass with care.

Towing toys. For many people a trip to the cottage, lake or resort can mean towing a boat, camper, or trailer. This can also mean a driver who is unfamiliar and/or inexperienced with operating a four-wheeler with a towed unit—testing a professional driver's defensive driving skills.

When approaching this type of highway situation allow for plenty of following distance, watch for swerving of the towed unit and the potential for over-correcting by the driver, and be alert to what seems like sudden slowing, stopping, or turning as the light systems on some towed units may not operate as they should.

Unfamiliar territory. Drivers need to be on the lookout for tourists when traveling through known vacation areas. Those who are unfamiliar with the area can unintentionally pose a hazard, such as changing direction or slowing/stopping without warning.

The impaired driver

Summer is a time when family and friends gather for special occasions such as reunions, graduations and weddings. It is also a time for less formal activities such as picnics and barbecues. These celebrations often go well into the evening hours. Drivers operating under the influence of alcohol or fatigue are issues that the professional driver needs to be aware of when traveling at night.

Just like any other defensive driving situation, the professional driver should be on the lookout for erratic driving such as varying speed and lane deviations.

If you feel you are following an impaired driver, allow for plenty of following distance or exit the roadway and contact law enforcement. Using a cell phone to notify law enforcement of an impaired driver is one of the exceptions to the cell phone rule.

5 Ways to Protect Your Eyes this Summer

Flying grit from off-roading or yard work, chemicals in pools, a sun that sears delicate tissues — summer is an obstacle course for your precious eyes. You can still have fun, but you may need to take some steps to protect your peepers.

A lot of this is common sense, which, sadly is not always so common.

Wear Sun Protection

Sunglasses may be one thing you don't want to get at the Dollar Store. They should be close to the face or wraparound. Some people like dark tints, but the UV-blocking coating is the same on any color. Polarized lenses may be more comfortable for workers outside because they block glare.

Wear Serious Eye Protection While Doing Home Projects

By eye protection, this does not mean reading or sunglasses. This means professional quality goggles from a home supply store. Chopping wood, hammering nails, sawdust, weed whacking or mowing, anything can fly around and chance of getting caught in your eye or someone you love.

Protecting Eyes During Sports

When playing most ball sports, eye protection is warranted. Most sporting goods stores sell plastic, molded shields or masks appropriate for different sports.

Avoid or Protect Against Chemicals

You can jump in a pool and if your eyes sting, it may mean the chemicals aren't balanced. Rarely will it affect your vision. However, if it hurts rinse immediately with clean water, even if you have to buy a bottle of water. If the stinging persists for hours, you should get a doctor to take a look.

Protect Against Oddball Events

If you think summer is one big eye accident waiting to happen, you might be right. Consider some of these other threats this summer:

- Pellet or dart guns,
- Fireworks
- Snapping bungee cords from tying down luggage



Scott King

7/18



Matthew Steadman— Alabama

William Chittam— Alabama



Jeremy Stratton

9 yrs

John Weaver

2 yrs



July is the beginning of the 3rd quarter of 2016 and another Safety Skills course has been assigned to all drivers. This quarter the Safety Skills course is on **Severe Weather and Outdoor Work**.

Although you have the end of September to complete your online course please take time to complete as soon as possible. If you don't have access to a computer at home you are welcome to use the computer in the office at the Grand Rapids location.

If you have misplaced or forgotten your password, please let Anne know and she can reset your login information!

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