



## This Month's Topic: Fall Driving Safety

**W**eather conditions can be unpredictable in the fall. A bright, beautiful afternoon can turn rainy and cold in minutes. And with days getting shorter, you could find yourself commuting to or from work in darkness. For drivers, fall also brings unique dangers to the roads.

As leaves begin to fall, wet leaves on the roadway can be as slippery as ice. They also can obscure traffic lines and other pavement markings, making driving in unfamiliar areas particularly difficult. Motorists should slow down and use extra caution on leaf-covered roadways.

### Rain

Majority of Californians live in places where it simply doesn't rain at all for six to nine months of each year; and when it does rain, not a lot actually comes out of the sky.

This means that when it finally does rain, no one can remember how to drive in the wet conditions. Typically, few drivers bother to slow down, no one seems to realize that cornering is a lot harder, braking distances much longer, etc. The urban freeways are particularly bad for this — try to avoid them during and immediately after any rain.

The first rain in a few weeks can be particularly dangerous, as water pools on top of dust and oil that haven't had a chance to wash away and makes the pavement extremely slippery.

- Slow down and use caution. Many drivers seem to think they can drive at their normal speed when it's raining. However, water on the road causes tires to lose traction and it also reduces driver perception. Water on the road is especially dangerous when there has been a long dry spell, which allows oil and grease to build up on the road.
- Turn on your headlights. Even if the rain is just a sprinkle, headlights will help increase your visibility. In California you must turn on your headlights if your windshield wipers are in continuous use due to rain. California Vehicle Code § 24400.
- Give yourself extra distance to stop. It can be dangerous to stop suddenly on slick roads, so give yourself a couple of extra car lengths to stop.
- Brake sooner and with less force. You never want to slam on your brakes in the rain. Brake earlier to avoid sliding, and to let the driver behind you know you're stopping.

### Back-To-School Traffic

Fall means back to school for kids, which means more cars and buses on the roads. Drivers also need to watch out for increased pedestrian traffic in the morning and afternoon as children walk to and from school and their neighborhood bus stops.

When driving within 500 to 1,000 feet of a school while children are outside or crossing the street, the speed limit is 25 mph unless otherwise posted. Also, if the school grounds have no fence and children are outside, never drive faster than 25 mph.

Some school zones may have speed limits as low as 15 mph. Always drive more carefully near schools, playgrounds, parks, and residential areas because children may suddenly dart into the street. Also, many children have not yet developed the ability to judge speeds and distances well enough to cross streets safely when cars are moving fast.

Some states have only specific hours when the school zones are in effect, but according to the California Vehicle Code § 22353, school zone speed limits are in effect anytime children are present. When in doubt, slow down. Yellow diamond shaped signs that say "School Zone Ahead" are also used to give California drivers an advanced warning of an approaching California school zone. Whenever you see any of these signs, it means that children may be present nearby, so remember to SLOW DOWN!

### Alisto Engineering Safety Statistics 2014

Motor Vehicle Accidents/ Total Miles Driven	Lost Work Days/ Total Work Days	Occupational Injuries and Illnesses
01/01/14–08/31/14	01/01/14–08/31/14	01/01/14–08/31/14
0/206,264 miles	0* day/ 168 days	1*

*\* From BC Environmental Insurance*

### \*Incident Report

What was the reported injury?

*Tendonitis*

What is Alisto doing to prevent the injury from happening again?

*Alisto is performing an ergonomic assessment of employees' workstations. Injured employee is doing physical therapy to prevent further injury.*

### Newsletter Highlight

*"Alisto strives to promote safe driving practices to protect its employees and the public.*

*Driving to and from our workplace and/or jobsite is the most dangerous part of our day. In addition to roadwork and weather hazards, unpredictable drivers and nonchalant pedestrians also pose hazards to our commutes. Overall, being aware of your surroundings, including other drivers on the road and pedestrians, and cautiously anticipating or gauging their intentions can help to mitigate these hazards.*

*Our vehicles' overall condition can also have a big impact on road safety, especially in changing weather conditions. Pre-drive vehicle inspections should be conducted before and during our work day.*

*Remember, a leery driver is a safe driver and helps us to obtain our goal of being "Safety Driven" (no pun intended)."*

**Larry Buenvenida**  
Safety Manager

*Alisto Engineering Group, Inc.*

## Sun Glare

Fall is also a bad time for sun glare on the roads. Sun glare can impact your sight for seconds after exposure, making it hard to see pedestrians, oncoming traffic, or the car in front of you. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, drivers describe being "blinded" after exposure, and this sometimes leads to accidents or near misses.

Sun glare can also cause problems when the sun sets behind drivers. In this case, sunlight can bounce off your rearview mirror or reflect off traffic lights up ahead, and this can blind you for a split second while your eyes adjust. It can also make it hard (or impossible) to see traffic lights, which can prevent you from knowing if you're supposed to stop or go.

## Planning Driving and Work Times and Rest Periods

The following recommendations for driving hours, working hours, and rest periods are tailored for employees who operate light- and medium duty vehicles and for whom driving is not the primary job duty. They are significantly more conservative than what is allowed under regulatory requirements for professional drivers who spend all of their time behind the wheel.

1. Maximum Daily Working (Driving and Non-Driving) Hours: eight hours, including breaks; not exceeding 40 hours (in one week) is recommended, including breaks.
2. Maximum Consecutive Hours of Driving: two hours. Take a break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving.
3. Minimum Time Off (no driving): The minimum amount of time off after eight hours of driving should be at least 11 hours.

## California Calls For Drivers To "Be Work Zone Alert"

Following the success of California's "Slow for the Cone Zone" public awareness campaign, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), and California Highway Patrol (CHP) is asking drivers to "Be Work Zone Alert" and help save lives on California's roads.



California law requires all drivers to move over if safe to do so, or slow down when they see amber flashing lights on Caltrans vehicles.

Highway construction is one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States. Since the 1920s, 183 Caltrans employees have been killed on the job—and the risk of death is seven times higher for highway workers than for average workers in any other industries, according to the latest data from the California Department of Industrial Relations. On average 1,000 Caltrans vehicles are struck each year—more than three each day.

"Using extra caution in construction zones will not only be safer for highway workers, it will also help ensure drivers and passengers make it home safely," said Office of Traffic Safety Director Rhonda L. Craft. "Driving involves split second decisions. We all need to be alert."

## Safety Tips

Here are some safety tips to remember for each of these three modes of transportation.

### Walking

1. Pay attention to what is around you.
2. When crossing the street look over your shoulder as well as both ways.
3. Make sure you are seen by drivers.
4. Be aware of turning vehicles.
5. Don't enter the crosswalk until you are ready to cross.
6. Always wear bright or reflective clothing at night.
7. And be careful not to text and walk, it could be dangerous!
8. Face traffic when walking - Walk against traffic, not with it.

### Bicycling

1. Use your head, wear a helmet!
2. Wear bright or reflective clothing to be seen.
3. Use headlights and reflectors to be visible at night.
4. Be predictable in your movements. Don't make cars guess.
5. Signal before you change directions.
6. Ride with traffic, not against traffic.

### Driving

1. Don't text and drive!
2. Watch for bicyclists and pedestrians. Give them plenty of room.
3. Be careful before opening your car door. Check for cyclists.
4. When on the freeway, watch for commuting cyclists at onramps and offramps.
5. Watch for bicyclists and pedestrians at night. They may not be easy to see.

### References

1. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/>
2. [http://arrivealivenow.org/safety\\_tips.htm](http://arrivealivenow.org/safety_tips.htm)
3. <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety>
4. <http://www.justdrivepa.org/Traffic-Safety-Information-Center/Fall-Driving/>
5. <http://www.californiadriving.com/roads-weather-conditions/>
6. [http://apps.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/hdbk/speed\\_limits.htm](http://apps.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/hdbk/speed_limits.htm)
7. <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/paffairs/news/pressrel/14pr055.htm>
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