

Five Summer Driving Hazards and What to Do About Them

Whether it's to do mission work or just have fun, there's nothing quite like a spring or summer road trip. Driving at this time of year may seem like a breeze compared to dealing with winter hazards, but summer driving has its own dangers. The good news is that, like most risks, they can be minimized with basic precautions.

1. Glare

While sunrise and sunset bring stunning colorful sky tableaus, they also can cause severe glare, leaving drivers suddenly unable to see.

Glare is impossible to eliminate altogether, but you can minimize it simply by wearing sunglasses and positioning your visors to block the sun. It is also important to recognize how dangerous and unpredictable glare can be, not follow other cars too closely, and keep your speed under control.

2. Hot Cars

It should go without saying: Don't leave passengers in a hot vehicle with the windows up for any length of time—especially young children, the elderly, or pets. If you stop, have everyone get out and stretch their legs instead of remaining in the car.

Also remember that heat can damage certain items. For example, wet swimsuits left in a hot car for a long period of time can encourage bacterial growth, and metal can quickly become very hot to the touch. So exercise caution when putting on safety belts, and make sure that everyone is buckled in before you take off.

3. Increased Construction

In the summer, the weather is not only good for hitting the road, but fixing it. You may find that many miles of your journey have some sort of road work or construction in progress. Look out for signs and follow the instructions. Keep to the reduced speed limit, remember to check your blind spots, watch for drivers switching lanes when their lane ends, and do not follow other cars closely, even at low speeds.

4. Motorcycles and Bicycles (and pedestrians, too)

As the weather gets nicer, you'll begin to see more motorcycles and bicycles on the road, as well as more people out running, walking, and simply enjoying the weather.

Because motorcycles are smaller than cars, they are hard to see when changing lanes or making turns. Keep them in mind and always check your blind spots and be ready to brake if a motorcycle or moped is in your path.

Give bicyclists a wide berth. Some local governments have ordinances concerning bicycles and bike lanes. Check to see what applies in your area. For example, in California, drivers are required to give cyclists three feet of space when they pass them.

Watch out for pedestrians crossing the road, as well as children or animals playing near the road, especially when passing a neighborhood park. Obey speed limits and slow down if you see a situation that could be dangerous. This is true in any weather.

5. Heavy Rains

Each season brings its own weather hazards, and summer is no different. Heavy rains and thunderstorms can greatly affect driving conditions. Slow down to avoid hydroplaning, which is what happens when your vehicle's tires lose traction on wet roads. If your vision is so impeded that you cannot drive safely, pull over and wait for the rain to lighten or the storm to pass.

Keep summer driving hazards, and what to do about them, top of mind, and you'll keep activities that involve driving fun and safe.