

# Safety Tips for Driving in FOG

Dear CHSU family,

- As we enter into late fall and winter, we tend to get frequent fog here in the Valley.
- Driving in fog is considered to be the most dangerous weather hazard, especially if it is exceptionally dense fog or combined with other adverse weather conditions (*like wet, slippery roads*).
- Foggy conditions are the number one cause of large multi-car pile ups, especially on the freeways.
- We want all of you to stay safe and enjoy the holiday season so please practice these following safety tips for driving in the fog!

## 1 Before Driving Ensure Your Windows are Clear

Fog and damp conditions can often cause your windows to collect moisture and reduce your visibility. Use your car's defroster and/or a squeegee or towel to clear ALL windows to ensure visibility before driving.

## 2 Slow Down and Watch Your Speedometer

During dense fog, people unknowingly speed up because fog creates an optical illusion where your body perceives that you are driving very slow. Since most people become nervous in fog, they don't look down at their speedometer. Over time, they begin going faster and faster. This is hands down the most dangerous aspect of driving in fog. Make a conscious effort to glance at your speedometer every now and then. There's a good chance you keep speeding up, without knowing it!

## 3 Turn On Low Beam Headlights

Always keep your headlights on when driving in foggy conditions. Without headlights, you essentially become a "ghost car" and others cannot see you. If your car is equipped with fog lights, use those too. When driving in fog, it's very important to stay visible to others.

## 4 Don't Use High Beams

You should never use your high beam headlights in foggy conditions. Your high beam headlights reflect off of the water vapor and actually decrease your visibility. You may feel that your low beam headlights are doing the same thing, but again, keep them on. It's the best way for you to be seen.

## 5 Follow The Right Side Line

When driving in fog, it's a good idea to follow the lines on the road with your eyes. Following the right line will keep you from inadvertently drifting into the center lane. Drivers are typically attracted to lights, and subconsciously, will steer toward lights. So it's better to watch the lines to be certain you are driving within your lane. Just make sure you aren't fixating. Keep your eyes moving.

## 6 Increase Your Following Distance

A safe following distance is crucial in fog. Most drivers tend to "bunch up" during foggy conditions because they feel it's easier to see. Driving in fog is scary, but now is not the time to follow too close. That's one of the big reasons massive pile-up's occur.

## 7 No Phones, Texting or Distractions

With limited visibility, you need to stay 100% focused on the road and avoid all distractions at all times. Keep your eyes moving and try to focus as far ahead as possible so you can be prepared for unexpected obstacles and vehicles.

## 8 Slow Down When Approaching Intersections, Traffic Lights and Stop Signs

Especially during the day, fog makes it extremely difficult to see traffic lights and stop signs at intersections. Therefore, you cannot trust that on-coming traffic will stop. Be sure to slowly approach intersections to ensure it's clear before crossing.

## 9 Turn Off Radio and Roll Down Windows at Intersections

When visibility is limited, you should turn off your radio and roll down your windows at intersections and train crossings for added safety. This way you can listen for on-coming traffic in the event you cannot see them. Remember, not everyone runs their headlights during the fog so listening for traffic can increase your safety.

## 10 If You Need To Stop

Sometimes, foggy conditions become too thick to drive safely. If you find that you're exceeding your comfort zone, it might be best to stop until the fog lifts. Just remember – this is an extremely dangerous situation! If you can't see, either can anyone else. Try to get as far off the road as possible. Pull into a driveway, parking lot, rest area, side street, or any other place where you can get away from heavy traffic flow. But if the roadway shoulder is your only option, pull way over. Go into the grass if necessary. If there's a curb, drive over it and park on the other side of the curb. Stay buckled up and turn your lights off! If you leave your lights on, people might think you are driving on the roadway and rear-end you. Make sure your foot is off the brake pedal, and do not use your flashers. Keep all your lights off. If there is shelter nearby, try to get there quickly. Otherwise, stay in your car and stay buckled up.

## 11 Postpone Driving During Extreme Conditions

Under most "normal" weather conditions, dense fog is temporary. When the atmosphere is especially humid, you may even get patches of fog that seem to wander from place to place. During the worst conditions, normally occurring at night or during early morning hours, the fog may be very dense and cover a span of many miles. This is the most dangerous condition and is usually warned by fog advisories or warnings from the National Weather Service. When fog warnings or advisories are issued, simply do not drive (this is especially true during fog warnings). It doesn't matter how good you and the other drivers on the roadway are, if you can't see, you can't possibly drive safely.