



FALL SEASON TRAFFIC SAFETY TIPS



The Marine Corps lost 26 warriors in fatal private motor vehicle mishaps in FY 2013. As of 23 Sep 2014, another 31 Marines have perished in motor vehicle crashes. The common element associated with these traffic mishaps is *human error*. Motor vehicle operators have the ability to control their actions behind the wheel; therefore, most, if not all of these crashes are preventable. Speed and aggressive driving were the main causes. The following Safety Tips are provided to enhance traffic safety awareness, and mitigate further loss during this fall season:

TRAFFIC SAFETY TIPS FOR THE FALL:

1. **Watch out for leaves:** Once leaves become wet, they can present slippery and dangerous driving conditions. Be sure to watch for patches of wet leaves on the road or on road lines. Dry leaves can also present a problem to your vehicle. Avoid parking your vehicle near leaf piles to prevent fires that could start from your vehicle's catalytic converter.
2. **Stay alert on the road:** The end of daylight saving time means reduced visibility on the roads, which can create unfamiliar driving conditions. Even on familiar roads, it's important that motorists use additional caution and adjust their driving habits to watch for pedestrians, cyclists and other roadway users who will be less visible, especially during the first few weeks of the change.
3. **Check your tire pressure:** With frequent weather and temperature changes, tires can expand and contract, causing them to lose air pressure. Make sure tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.
4. **Avoid sun glare:** With the change in time you may need to adjust to the different morning or late afternoon glare from the sun. The glare can cause reflections off car windows and hoods and decrease your visibility. Have a good pair of sunglasses readily available to counter daytime glare, and consider lenses with anti-reflective coating to reduce glare when night driving can't be avoided.
5. **Plan ahead for wet conditions:** Fall often brings rainfall, which can decrease visibility and cause hydroplaning. Make sure your windshield wipers are in good working condition. If driving on a road with excess water, slow down and avoid sudden movements with the steering wheel or brake pedal. If you feel like you're floating, steer straight and gently release the gas pedal until you feel the tires make contact with the road surface. In an especially heavy downpour you may want to pull off the road until it's safe to continue.

TRAFFIC SAFETY RESOURCES:

- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety>
- MARFORCOM / DSS site: <https://eis.usmc.mil/sites/mfcom/safety/default.aspx>