

## How Light Affects Driving

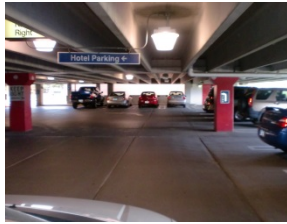
The amount of light we have while driving is going to affect how well we can see things. Light conditions make it difficult for drivers to see the roadway and objects in and around the driving path.

### Too Much Light

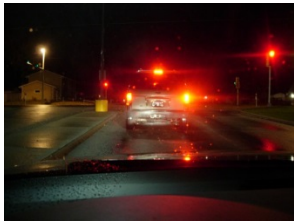
At times we could encounter too much light for us to safely see our driving path and the surroundings. Some examples of too much light would be:



Lighting at night could cause temporary vision problems for up to 7 seconds.



Entering a well-lit parking ramp or garage at night.



Glare from vehicle tail and brake lights could blend with other lights.



Light reflecting off wet pavement can make it difficult to see pavement markings.



Driving into the sunset or sunrise makes it difficult to see things around you and for other vehicles to see you.



Sun glare on a dirty windshield makes it difficult to see through the windshield.



Glare off other vehicles and objects make it difficult to see others



Dashboard lights at night could cause eye strain and make it difficult to see outside the vehicle.

How do we deal with too much light?

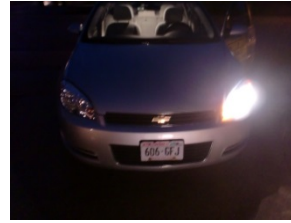
When you encounter too much light, the first thing you should do is **SLOW DOWN**. Reduce your speed so that if you have to stop suddenly, you can do so safely. Don't go rushing into an area you can't see clearly. During the day, use your visor or put on sunglasses. You may even have to hold up your hand to block the light. At night, dim your dashboard lights and don't drive with interior lights on.

## Not Enough Light

At times you are going to encounter not enough light to clearly see things on or near your driving path. Some examples of not enough light would be:



When driving during the hours of darkness with dirty or out of alignment headlights.



When your headlights are not working fully or they are discolored or fogged over.



Entering or going under a bridge.



When entering a parking ramp or garage your eyes need time to adjust to the change in light.



When driving on a tree covered roadway. The shaded areas may hide people or objects in the roadway.



Entering a tunnel. Even though there are lights in the tunnel, your eyes may need time to adjust.

How do we deal with not enough light? The first thing you should do if you encounter not enough light is to slow down. If you can, put on your lights, use your high beam headlights if you still need more light and there are no other vehicles within 500 feet in front of you.

## Proper Headlight Use

As a driver, you want to do everything possible to keep a crash from happening. By using your headlights, whenever you drive, you will make your vehicle more visible to other users. Even though you can see clearly during daytime driving, headlight use will increase your chances of other vehicles seeing you. Most new vehicles have DRL's (daytime running lights) that automatically turn on when you start the vehicle. Check your vehicle owner's manual to see if you have DRL's.

Make sure that your headlights are clean and free of obstructions. Also make sure that your headlights are properly aligned to light the area in front of your vehicle.

**WI LAW – requires drivers to have their vehicle headlights on from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise or whenever you cannot see people or objects at a distance of 500 feet.**

Using your low beam headlights during bad weather (rain, fog, snow) will make your vehicle more easily seen by other vehicles and users. Some states also require you to have your headlights on whenever your windshield wipers are on. This is a good rule to follow.

**Do not** drive with only your parking lights on. Parking lights do not give off enough light to light your driving path and indicate to other vehicles and users that your vehicle is parked and not moving. Driving with just your parking lights on is against WI law and could result in a ticket.

Turn on your low beam headlights during the day when driving on a tree covered road with lots of shade, when entering a parking garage, when entering a tunnel or covered bridge, and when pulling into your garage at home. Your eyes will be able to adjust to the light conditions better if your headlights are on.

### High Beam Headlights

Only use your high beam (bright) headlights in areas with very little light. Do not use high beams whenever there is another vehicle within 500 feet to the front of your vehicle. Doing so could cause the other driver to be blinded by your headlights.

If another vehicle approaches you with their high beam headlights on, do not turn on your high beams. By doing so, you will cause the other driver to be unable to see you clearly for up to 5 seconds. Now we have two drivers heading toward each other unable to see clearly. Slow down and try not to look directly into their lights.

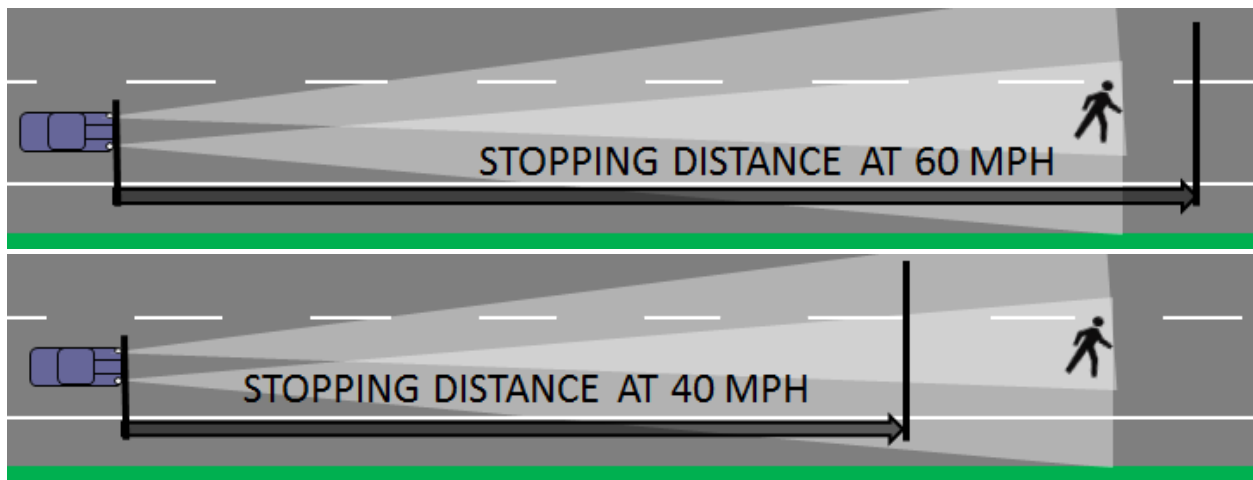


You may have to hold up your hand to block the light from the oncoming vehicle while still looking to your path of travel.

**Do not** use your high beams during snow, rain, or fog. The light from the high beams will reflect back and create a "light blanket" making it difficult to see.

### Overdriving Headlights

Overdriving your headlights is when you are not able to stop within the area lit by your headlight beams. You should always leave at least 4 seconds between you and other vehicles in front of you when driving at night. You need about 1 1/2 car lengths for each 10 mph in speed to stop the vehicle. If you were going 60 mph, you would need about 9 car lengths to safely stop. If your headlights only light an area equal to 4 car lengths in front of you, you should only go about 40 mph.



Would you be able to stop in time to avoid hitting the person at: 60 mph \_\_\_\_\_ 40 mph \_\_\_\_\_