

## Summer Driving Hazards

Summertime presents drivers with unique challenges, such as added traffic from summer vacationers, sun glare and unpredictable weather patterns. In fact, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, July and August are the most dangerous driving months of the year. Some summer driving hazards include:

- **Pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists**—Since summer weather allows more people to enjoy outdoor activities, vehicles frequently share the road with joggers, bicyclists and motorcyclists.
- **Increased traffic**—During the summer months, roads are often more congested due to traveling vacationers and road construction projects.
- **Inclement weather**—In the summer, heavy rainfall, hail, and high winds are common in some locations.
- **Sun glare**—Sunshine can cause sun glare and present a challenge for drivers by potentially impairing vision. This issue may be particularly prevalent during early morning and evening hours.
- **Intoxicated drivers**—The summer months can be a dangerous time for driving because of all the outdoor celebrations and activities, and research shows alcohol-involved crashes and DUIs increase during this season.

The American Automobile Association has reported that the 100 days after Memorial Day are the “100 Deadliest Days” of the year for car accidents, with an average of 10 deaths each day. Drivers can minimize summer driving hazards by:

- **Avoiding distractions.** Drivers should remain vigilant and check their surroundings before making lane changes, opening doors or coming to a sudden stop.
- **Paying attention to weather forecasts.** Summer weather patterns include tornados, flash floods, thunderstorms and downpours. Drivers should check the forecast before heading out on the road.
- **Increasing following distance.** By increasing vehicle following distance, drivers can avoid accidents in heavier traffic and construction zones.

Drivers must always take precautions when heading out onto the road, but summer presents some specific risks that must be considered. For more information, contact us today.

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## Staying Safe While Working in the Summer Heat

During the summer, thousands of workers suffer from heat-related illnesses due to exposure to hot and humid conditions. Construction workers, landscapers, farmers and others who spend time outdoors are all especially susceptible to heat-related illnesses, including heat stroke. Heat-related illnesses are also more common among workers who are not fully acclimatized to their job, are 65 years of age or older, are overweight, have heart disease or high blood pressure, or take certain medications.

The most common types of heat-related illnesses are:

- **Heat exhaustion**—Heat exhaustion can occur when the body loses excessive water and salt as a result of sweating. Symptoms include pale skin, muscle cramps and nausea.
- **Heat stroke**—Medical help should be called immediately if someone is suffering from heat stroke. Signs include body temperature reaching above 103 degrees, flushed skin, rapid breathing, convulsions or unresponsiveness.

Workers can beat the summer heat in the workplace by:

- **Drinking plenty of fluids.** Staying hydrated can help workers maintain a normal body temperature. Workers should aim to

drink at least one pint every hour and avoid liquids that can dehydrate the body, such as caffeine.

- **Working while it's cooler.** Employers should schedule shifts when the sun is less intense and temperatures are cooler whenever possible.
- **Taking breaks.** When heat stress is high, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration recommends that workers take hourly breaks.
- **Wearing loose fitting, lightweight clothing.** Flowing garments can keep the body cool and dry by allowing air circulation close to the body. Workers should also look for clothing that is quick-drying with built-in moisture management technology.

During the summer months, employers should act to keep workers safe while working in the heat. For more information, contact us today.