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## DRIVING IN FOG

Many drivers, particularly those new to the road, will have not as yet experienced driving in hazardous driving conditions such as fog. Naturally, due to the vast reduction in visibility it can be absolutely perilous to travel in such weather conditions - I like to think of fog as a low-level cloud. The most basic, straight forward advice anyone could give would obviously be don't venture out in it - unfortunately this is not always possible, or for that matter realistic.

Below are just some of the tips you should aim to take on board should it be absolutely necessary to make a journey in such conditions:

### Tip #1

Because they are rarely used, the location and operation of the fog light controls are often not known. It is absolutely VITAL that you familiarise yourself with both before you begin your journey. All UK road legal vehicles are fitted with at least one rear facing fog light, and many modern vehicles are fitted with front facing fog lights also. Ensure that you're familiar with both - where fitted. When driving, if you look in your interior mirror and are unable to see the travelling behind you due to the thickness of the fog, then this should be your cue to switch on the rear fog light.

### Tip #2

Always use your 'Dipped Headlight' beam (avoid using the 'Main Beam' as the bank of fog will act much like a mirror - the light will be reflected right back at you). If the visibility is reduced to less than 100 metres (328 feet), you should switch on your fog lights - make sure that you turn them off when visibility improves as they can dazzle other road users.

If a road has street lights, then it may not be necessary to use your fog lights - this should be assessed.

### Tip #3

Ensure that you keep your windows clear by using the windscreen wipers, along with both front & rear demisters.

### Tip #4

Allow as much time as necessary to complete your journey. If you set yourself a target time of arrival, you could increase your stress levels to the point whereby your concentration levels drop - this of course, could be highly dangerous.

#### Tip #5

Your judgment of both speed and distance will be affected. Keep lots of space around your vehicle and avoid using the rear lights of the vehicle in front to give you a sense of distance and speed - this will likely provide you with a false sense of security and you'll probably be closer than you think.

Take particular care at road junctions.

You should also aim to travel at a slow, but progressive speed. Check your speedometer regularly as fog can create an illusion of 'slow motion' therefore you may actually be travelling faster than you thought. Avoid speeding up and slowing down quickly - this could mislead both you and the vehicles following behind. The term 'thick fog' is often used. The 'thickness' of this fog can vary massively from one moment to the next - don't use these brief increases in visibility to speed up as visibility will be likely to decrease again immediately.

#### Tip #6

When you have to stop in a queue of traffic, ensure that you apply the hand brake in order to secure the vehicle for extra safety. It's also advisable to press the foot brake at the same time so that your brake lights are showing too (the light emitted from the brake lights is more intense than that of the rear tail lights). If a vehicle approaches from behind, you should squeeze the brake pedal on and off in a regular pattern - this will inform the approaching vehicle that you are stationary. If you didn't show the brake lights in this manner, you would either be showing your rear tail lights only or you would be keeping the brake pedal pressed - both of which could appear to the approaching vehicle as simply a rear tail light.

The 'flashing' pattern would allow the approaching vehicle to differentiate between whether you are moving or stopped.

#### Tip #7

Because of the reduced visibility, you should try to utilise your other senses. If you are using the vehicles audio system, turn the volume down (or turn the system off completely) then open your window slightly to allow you to listen for other traffic around you. If you're travelling on a Motorway in thick fog, keep to the very left lane (lane one). Doing so will allow you to quickly access the hard shoulder if absolutely necessary.

#### Tip #8

If you have any concerns or doubts about your safety, the best course of action is to find somewhere safe to park whilst the worst of it clears.

So there you have it!

As mentioned earlier, if your journey is not vital, then the best advice is to not venture out in it. Should your intended journey be absolutely necessary, then please proceed with caution - don't ever underestimate fog and the dangers it can present.

Best wishes and 'Safe Driving for Life'

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