



Today's discussion is from the Motorized Operations Category.

DRIVING SAFETY

Driving is one of the most hazardous things we do because we literally perform the task hundreds of times in the course of our daily lives we tend to take it for granted. Based on recent accident trends, vehicle accidents are the source of more deaths and serious injuries to wildland firefighters than any other single cause.

- To be a safe driver you have to *want* to be one. Take a good hard look at your driving habits. Are you training yourself to do the right things the right way, like fastening your seat belt, checking your mirrors, and maintaining safe following distances?
- Inattentiveness is a major contributing factor in motor vehicle accidents within the wildland firefighting community. Since the average adult attention span is 15-20 minutes we must develop techniques that allow us to refocus our attention on our driving.
- Many things can lure our attention away from our driving such as: fatigue, eating and drinking, reading directions and maps, writing, cell phone and radio use, conversation within the vehicle and music.
 - ✓ Drive only when you are well rested and alert and avoid driving during the hours of 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM. Take a 10 to 15 minute break after every 2 hours.
 - ✓ Practice situational awareness; be aware of what is happening in front, behind, and on both sides of your vehicle.
 - ✓ Never drive when taking medications that make you drowsy.
 - ✓ Delegate navigation and communication to a passenger or pull over.
 - ✓ By constantly moving your vision, checking mirrors and distant road conditions, you can avoid highway hypnosis and daydreaming.
 - ✓ Avoid eating or drinking while driving.
 - ✓ When talking with passengers, keep your eyes on the road and both hands on the steering wheel. Avoid serious or argumentative conversations.
 - ✓ Do not be in a hurry, be patient.
- Safe driving starts with a safe vehicle. Something as simple as under-inflated tires can have serious consequences. Before operating any vehicle, do a walk-around to look for potential problems, make sure the lights and blinkers work, and adjust your seat and mirrors. If it is the first time you have driven the vehicle, make yourself aware of where everything is.

Additional Resources:

Video: Firefighter Remember This Series - [Firefighter: Remember This - Engine Rollover: Why This Accident Started Months Ago](#)
[Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations](#)

Have an idea? Have feedback? Share it.

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