

CAR SENSE

Top 4 Fall Driving Hazards (And How to Handle Them)

by Justin Metz on October 2, 2018



The start of fall brings a lot of welcome things: a new school year, cooler temps and changing leaves.

You may not notice it right away, but your daily commute is affected by the shorter days and changing weather, too. (For example: Did you know wet leaves can be as slippery as ice?)

Stay alert this fall. Here are the top things to look out for when you're on the road:

RAIN AND WET LEAVES

As the weather cools down, the rain picks up. Combine that with lower temperatures and you'll find your tires may have less grip than they did in the summer months.

To start, always drive cautiously in wet conditions – that includes driving slower than you would on a dry road. And be on the lookout for wet leaves, which can be as slick as ice.

It's also important to check your tires to ensure they have enough tread. Insert a penny into your tread with Abraham Lincoln's head upside down and facing you. If you insert the penny all the way and all of Lincoln's head is still showing, that means your tread has worn down and it's time for new tires.

Driving too fast for the conditions or cruising on worn tires can lead to hydroplaning. So it's important to know what to do if you start hydroplaning (<https://www.erieinsurance.com/blog/what-should-you-do-if-you-start-hydroplaning>): take your foot off the gas, firmly grip the steering wheel and calmly make steering adjustments.

DEER COLLISIONS

Deer are most active from October to January, especially during the dusk and dawn hours. If you've ever seen the aftermath of a deer collision, you know it can do severe damage to your vehicle.

Avoid deer on the roadways by slowing down during peak hours, paying attention to road signs and using your high beams to increase visibility when possible. Learn more about how to avoid hitting a deer...and what to do if you hit one. (<https://www.erieinsurance.com/blog/hitting-a-deer>)

EARLIER SUNSETS

The days get shorter in the fall, so you'll find yourself driving in the dark more often. This is another peak time for accidents.

Make sure you're staying alert during nighttime hours. Be on the lookout for pedestrians and turn your headlights on during dawn or dusk hours. Keep a safe distance from other vehicles and know when to swerve (<https://www.erieinsurance.com/blog/swerve-or-no-swerve>) if there's an object in the road.

SCHOOL CHILDREN

The kids are back to school. The house is quieter. But if you drive just before the school day starts or after it ends...you're in for lots of crosswalks and bus stops. Welcome to back-to-school driving (<https://www.erieinsurance.com/blog/back-to->

school-driving-tips).

Since more kids are walking and biking to school, you'll need to stay alert around schools and neighborhoods. Be aware of bus safety and school drop-off procedures as well. And if you'd like to avoid the risk altogether, consider finding a new route to avoid these high-traffic areas.

It's always important to be prepared. But even the most cautious drivers can find themselves face-to-face with something unexpected. That's why it's important to have the right auto insurance (<https://www.erieinsurance.com/auto-insurance>).

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