



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY
EXPERIMENT STATION

MAFES DAWG TRACKS

With the recent time change, we may be driving more in the dark hours than previously. Good headlights are a critical component to driving safely.

A lot of vehicles now have a feature to turn headlights on automatically when daylight starts to turn to dark. However, you must ensure your headlight switch is in the correct position for this to work properly. But automatic doesn't work for every condition; you may need to manually turn on headlights in adverse weather (rain, fog, smoke, etc.).

What if other's headlights are blinding me?

If an approaching vehicle is using high beams, when they should not, or have installed those blue-white aftermarket bulbs (you know the annoying ones that seem to be on high even on low), just keep your eyes' focus to the right edge of the road to help avoid being blinded by their light and maintain staying in your lane.

Avoid blinding others.

Ensure your headlights are adjusted correctly. This may be necessary to tweak if you have modified your vehicle by lowering or lifting the stance from stock height, or if you have replaced the original headlight housings.

Keep added on light bars and auxiliary lights turned off when on public roads with other vehicles.

For more info contact:
Leslie Woolington
MAFES/MSU-ES Risk Mgmt.
LHW4@msstate.edu
662-325-3204

When to use high or low beams.

High beams:

- When there are few or no streetlights on the road, high beams will help you see farther down your path, preventing you from hitting any animals or pedestrians crossing in front of you.
- When on roads and not meeting or coming up behind another vehicle.

Low beams:

- Poor weather limits visibility during the day. (Using high beams in fog or rain is often more dangerous because of light reflection.)
- City driving at night when short-range light is sufficient.
- Another vehicle is approaching in the opposite direction.
- Following another vehicle at night.

Aged headlights

Headlights can quickly become dirty or, more often, cloudy from age. You've heard the saying "they just don't make things like they used to" ... well this definitely is true regarding longevity of headlights on newer vehicles. If the plastic headlight lenses are not routinely polished and maintained to a crystal-clear finish it can cause problems for all drivers. Aged, clouded headlight lens will cause a glare to oncoming vehicles. Also, the light can no longer be focused and creates a shorter beam, thereby decreasing your range of visibility as a driver. So maintain your headlights, by using a lens restoration product or replacing the headlight housing all together.

Sources:

<https://www.dmv.org/how-to-guides/when-to-use-headlights.php>
<http://www.lighrestore.com/automotive-headlight-issues/a-rant-about-our-governments-standards-regarding-driving-safety>
<http://www.gmcproblems.com/trends/terrible-headlights/>