

Location_____Trainer_____Date_____

DEFENSIVE DRIVING BASICS RURAL DRIVING HAZARDS

There is no doubt about it. Rural driving is easier and more relaxing than driving in the city. But it's also more dangerous. While city drivers are involved in more collisions than rural drivers, far more people die in rural collisions. The reason for this is simple: People drive faster in the country. Other rural hazards include poor lighting—or no lighting—animals on the road and poor road conditions.

Speed Is the Biggest Hazard

The higher speeds of rural driving greatly increase the dangers of oncoming traffic, blind curves and hills, and people entering the road at lower speeds. To drive safely in the country, make sure your stopping distance is never greater than the distance you can see ahead. This means you must slow down when approaching a curve or hill, not just so you can stay in control of your vehicle, but so you can stop in time if there is an obstacle, such as a stalled car or an animal, in the road around the curve or over the hill.

When Roads Are Dark

Rural roads are usually not lighted. When driving on dark roads, never overdrive your headlights. This means you drive at a speed that allows you to stop in the area lit by your headlights.

Dim your high beams when you get within 500 feet of an oncoming car or 300 feet of a car in front of you. If a car approaches you with its high beams on, look to the right side of the road to avoid being blinded by the light. Avoid turning on your high beams to signal the other driver.

Slow-Moving Vehicles

Be on the lookout for slow-moving vehicles such as tractors and horse-drawn vehicles. Watch out for bicyclists enjoying a ride in the country. All these vehicles have a right to use the road. Avoid crowding them or scaring animals.

When the Nearest Gas Station Isn't

The country is a wonderful place to get away from it all—unless your car breaks down. If you frequently drive in the country, keep your car in good working order, with your gas tank at least half full. Carry emergency supplies in case you have a breakdown.