

Safe driving

Fact or fiction

Wearing sunglasses at night helps with glare

You should never wear sunglasses at night to help with glare as it is dangerous and affects your ability to drive safely.

I am driving only a short distance so I don't need my glasses

Regardless of how far you are driving or how well you know the roads, you should always wear your prescription glasses if they are prescribed for driving.

I haven't had a crash so my vision must be fine

In the early stage of many eye conditions, you may not notice any symptoms. This is why regular eye examinations are so important for safe driving.

Information

Why do I need good vision for driving?

Good vision is essential for safe driving. Even a small loss of vision can affect how well you read road signs or see objects from a distance. Good peripheral vision is also very important for driving safely as many of the everyday driving tasks such as merging, changing lanes and seeing pedestrians require peripheral vision.

Skills needed for safe driving

Today's driver faces increasingly busy roads and many complex decisions. How well you see in the distance is the most important visual skill for driving. The faster you drive, the less time you have to react to what you see. Poor distance vision becomes more dangerous as speed increases. Both your eyes need to work together as a team to help you judge distances correctly, while your field of vision allows you to see traffic and pedestrians without looking away from the road ahead.



Why is it harder to drive at night?

Safe driving at night requires the ability to see in low light levels, beyond the range of the car headlights. It also requires the ability to recover quickly from the glare of oncoming headlights. Night vision deteriorates with age in all of us. If you are troubled by glare, consider driving less at night and driving more slowly.

What about colour vision?

Colour plays an important part in road safety. Drivers who have difficulty distinguishing colours can learn to distinguish traffic signal lights by their position and differences in brightness. Your optometrist can test your colour vision very easily so ask for a test at your next eye examination.

Conditions that affect driver safety

The good news is that with a visit to an optometrist, nearly all drivers can be helped to reach the vision standards necessary for safe driving. Some conditions that can cause vision problems are eye diseases such as macular degeneration, cataract, visual field problems that affect your peripheral vision, refractive errors like myopia (short-sightedness) that require prescription glasses, and loss of vision in one eye.

Eye and vision tips for safe driving

If prescription glasses are to be used for driving, make sure you wear them. There are many excellent prescription lenses designed specifically to make driving easier. Talk to your optometrist about prescription sunglasses, anti-glare coatings and other great options to enhance your comfort and safety when driving.

What happens if I have a vision problem?

You are legally responsible to notify your state or territory driver licensing authority if you have an eye or vision problem that could or does affect your ability to drive safely. After being notified, the driver licensing authority may allow you to retain your licence with no further action, issue a conditional licence, such as driving only during the day or wearing prescription glasses while driving, or require you to have annual or two-yearly eye examinations. Your optometrist will help you through this process.

Ask your optometrist or visit goodvisionforlife.com.au for more information and help to select the treatments that meet all your eye care and lifestyle needs.

Your optometrist