

Every year, officers from the Newberg-Dundee Police Department respond to numerous calls from citizens requesting information on proper vehicle lighting. With the winter driving season now upon us, the rain, snow, and fog can severely reduce visibility for drivers. The proper use of a vehicle's lighting can increase driving safety.

Headlights

Headlights may only be white in color. They must be turned on from sunset to sunrise. They must also be used when conditions limit the visibility ahead to less than 1,000 feet. Headlights not only help you to see, but also help others see you. Driving with only your parking lights on in limited visibility is not adequate lighting and it is illegal.

High beams

When your vehicle's high beam headlights are on, you must dim or lower the beam when an oncoming vehicle is within 500 feet. Turn off the high beam headlights when you are following another vehicle within 350 feet. Headlight glare in a rearview mirror can blind another driver.

Fog lights

A vehicle may be equipped with fog lights. The lights may be white or amber and the beam must strike the road not more than 75 feet ahead of the vehicle on which it is mounted. These lights are to be used in the same manner as high beam headlights, unless they are less than 300 candlepower.

Taillights

A vehicle must have two red taillights, one on each side of the vehicle, visible from 500 feet to the rear.

License plate light

Every vehicle must have at least one white rear license plate light. This light must make the rear registration plate clearly legible from a distance of 50 feet to the rear of the vehicle.

Rear reflectors

Two red reflectors are required on the rear of every vehicle. One reflector must be on each side of the vehicle, either as part of the taillights or separate.

Brake Lights

Two red brake lights are required. They must be mounted on the rear of the vehicle and as far apart as possible. The brake lights must be visible from 500 feet in normal daylight.

Turn Signals

Every vehicle must have right and left turn signal lights on the front and rear. Turn signal lights on the front may be amber or white. On the rear, these signals may be red, amber, or yellow. The signals must be visible from 500 feet.

Lens covers or tinting on turn signals, taillights, and brake lights are prohibited. They reduce the size and effectiveness of the lamps and reflectors, therefore reducing your vehicle's visibility to other drivers. Headlight covers are only permitted when headlights are not required to be used.

Trailer Lighting

All trailers must have taillights, brake lights, turn signals, rear red reflectors, and a license plate light (if a license plate is required). Larger trailers require more lighting equipment and reflectors depending upon their size.

-Senior Officer Huntley Miller
Newberg-Dundee Police Department

Sources:

Oregon Department of Transportation: Driver and Motor Vehicle Services: 2014-2015 Oregon Driver Manual

www.oregon.gov/ODOT/ts/Pages/veh_equipment.aspx

www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/docs/veheq/oregonequipmenthandoutcolor.pdf