

END OF DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME: SAFETY TIPS

As autumn leaves fall and November approaches, our annual ritual of turning back the clocks brings more than just an extra hour of sleep. This "fall back" to standard time, happening on November 3rd at 2 AM in 2024, calls for some thoughtful preparation to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.

The first few days after the time change can be particularly tricky as our bodies adjust. Many of us find ourselves driving or commuting in darker conditions, making it crucial to stay alert and visible. Pedestrians are 3-times more likely to be struck by a vehicle in the days following the end of daylight savings time, compared to the rest of the year. Think light-colored clothing, reflective gear, and well-lit paths. Cyclists and pedestrians become extra vigilant, sticking to designated lanes and crosswalks.

Inside our homes, this time serves as a perfect reminder for some essential safety checks. As we adjust our clocks, we take a moment to test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, ensuring fresh batteries power these silent guardians. Our fire extinguishers get a quick inspection too – better safe than sorry.

With winter approaching, many of us use this time to prepare our vehicles for the colder months ahead. Emergency kits with warm clothes, flashlights, and non-perishable snacks find their way into our trunks, ready for unexpected situations.

Perhaps most importantly, we pay attention to our sleep routines. By maintaining consistent bedtimes and avoiding sleep disruptors like late-night caffeine or heavy snacks, we help our bodies adapt more smoothly to the time change. After all, a well-rested person is a safer person, whether at home, on the road, or at work.

Here are some safety tips for the fall back to standard time:

- **Be alert:** The days after the time change can be riskier for accidents. Be extra careful when driving, at work, and at home.
- **Get enough sleep:** Avoid sleep debt in the days before the time change. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
- **Check your alarms:** When you set your clock back, check and replace the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Test them to make sure they work.

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- **Prepare an emergency kit:** Put together a winter emergency kit for your car with warm clothes, a blanket, flashlight, batteries, water, non-perishable snacks, and more.
- **Be visible:** Wear light-colored or reflective clothing, and carry a flashlight. Bicycles should have a front light and back reflector in low light.
- **Check headlights and taillights:** You'll likely be doing more driving in darker conditions.
- **Use crosswalks and bike lanes:** Use intersections with traffic lights and pedestrian signals, and stick to protected sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes.
- **Avoid distractions:** Put your phone away and focus on the road.
- **Check your fire extinguishers:** Make sure they are in good working condition and need recharging.
- **Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and snacks before bed:** These can disrupt your sleep hormones.

As we prepare to wind back our clocks and embrace the earlier sunsets, let's remember that safety isn't just about following a checklist – it's about being mindful and prepared for the seasonal changes ahead. By taking these simple precautions now, we can help ensure a smoother transition and a safer autumn season for ourselves, our families, and our communities. After all, that extra hour we gain is best spent knowing we've done everything we can to protect what matters most.

