



Headlights On At All Times in Southeast Alaska

Facts

- Approximately 15 people die in Alaska each year in head-on crashes.
- National data indicate that headlights-on signing and compliance could eliminate 7 to 15 per cent of these crashes.
- In Southeast Alaska between 2005 and 2009 (the data period used to develop the project) there were 3 major, 6 minor, and 7 property damage-only crashes associated with such events on ten state highways.
- Using daytime running lights (DRL) increases the visibility and recognizability of road users and thus reduces the risk of a crash. Research has shown that road users who do not use headlights during the daytime, pedestrians and cyclists, can also benefit from DRL.
- In-depth crash studies have shown that not having seen the other road user or having seen the other road user too late plays a role in 50% of the daytime crashes, and for intersection crashes this is even 80%.
- “Headlights On At All Times” signs are regulatory in nature (black text on white background) and are enforceable. Failure to use headlights where required may result in a fine up to \$60.
- Routes were selected for analysis and inclusion in the project based upon the following attributes: proximity to Alaska Marine Highway System terminals, proximity to border crossings, remoteness, crash history, and/or traffic volume.
- This project is federally funded through the Highway Safety Improvement Program. The purchase price of the new signs is \$25,000. The signs are being installed by DOT&PF maintenance and operations staff.



Southeast Alaska “Headlights On At All Times” Locations

- **Haines:** Haines Highway - U.S. Customs station (MP 39.5) to the Jones Point Rd intersection (MP 0.8)
- **Juneau:** Glacier Hwy – MP 14 (south junction of Auke Rec Rd) to Echo Cove, Thane - end of road to Old AJ Mine access road (MP 0.8), North Douglas Hwy - Kowee Creek Bridge to end of road (N. Douglas)
- **Ketchikan:** North Tongass Hwy – MP 1 (400ft north of 50mph speed zone) to Pandora’s Lane intersection (MP 13.2), South Tongass Hwy - Cemetery Rd intersection (MP 3.1) to 1.8 miles south of Whitman Creek Bridge (MP 13)

- **Prince of Wales Island:** Klawock Hollis Hwy - Port St Nicholas Rd intersection (MP 0.9) to Hollis Ferry Terminal (MP 30.4)
- **Petersburg:** Mitkof Hwy – Kings Row intersection (MP 0.7) to 2.2 miles south of South Mitkof Ferry Terminal access road (MP 26)
- **Sitka:** Halibut Point Rd - Ferry access road (MP 6.6) to Katlian Street/Moller Dr intersection, Sawmill Creek Rd - Indian River Rd intersection (MP 0.5) to Blue Lake Rd intersection (MP 4.9)
- **Wrangell:** Zimovia Hwy - Case Ave intersection (MP 0.9) to Nemo Point Rd intersection (MP 13.2)

Why use daytime headlights in Alaska?

Alaska's northern hemisphere requires greater judgment during both summer and winter because:

- The twilight period is quite long.
- The shadows produced by low sun angles in the summer often reduce visibility of vehicles.
- Vehicles take on a grey tint and become camouflaged against the surrounding grey-tinted sky, mountains, buildings and roads.
- Deep shadows can make a car nearly invisible even on the brightest days of the year.

Will this shorten headlamp bulb life or lower fuel economy?

Running vehicle lights in the daytime does not significantly shorten bulb life. Systems like those on General Motors cars that use high beams are designed to operate at half their normal power during daylight hours, thereby conserving energy and reducing the effect on a vehicle's fuel economy. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that only a fraction of a mile per gallon will be lost, depending on the type of system used. GM estimates the cost to be about \$3 per year for the average driver.

Alaska Law

Motorists in Alaska must drive with headlights on where a roadway is posted to do so. 13 AAC 04.010. When lights are required

(a) Every vehicle traveling on a highway or other vehicular way or area within the state must illuminate lights

(1) between one half hour after sunset and one half hour before sunrise; or

(2) at any other time when, because of insufficient light or other atmospheric conditions, persons or vehicles on the highway are not clearly discernible at a distance of 1000 feet.

(b) Stop lights, turn signals, and other signaling devices must be illuminated as required by this chapter.

(c) Every vehicle traveling on a highway or vehicular way or area must illuminate lights when traveling on any roadway that is posted with signs requiring the use of headlights.

(d) For the purposes of (c) of this section, lights include low intensity headlights and daytime running lamp devices that meet the standards in 49 C.F.R. 571 (revised as of August 29, 1996), if the headlights are not otherwise required under (a)(1) or (2) of this section