



# DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Mittelstadt Chief Deputy

## Law of the Month – October 2021

### **PLEASE TURN ON YOUR HEADLIGHTS**

We have all seen the damage done with automobile crashes not only in Dodge County, but nationwide. As stated in the Operation Phones Down post, the Dodge County Sheriff's Office, as well as local departments cannot make our highways safer alone. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, throughout 2020 in Wisconsin, there were 115,694 total traffic crashes. Of those crashes, 23,747 had injuries involved and 540 of those crashes were fatal. Even though there are 60% less vehicles on the roadways at night, over 40% of all fatal car accidents occur at night. With winter approaching quickly, it is getting dark outside much sooner. What this means, is that more traffic will be out and about during these dark periods of time. This is why it is crucial to make sure all of the lighting on your vehicle is fully functional. State law requires that your headlights and taillights be in working condition. Also, it is required that in rain, snow, or fog, (yes, even during the day) you turn on your headlights. With a lot of vehicles, headlights turn on automatically but if you find it hard to see and your headlights have not turned on yet, don't take the risk. Turn them on. Bad weather limits your visibility which means that if objects in front of you are not visible 500 feet from your vehicle, you must turn on your headlights. Turning on your headlights doesn't only help you see, but it helps the other families out on the road see you. People can't avoid what they can't see. Let's all work to reduce crashes in Dodge County both day and night.

### **WISCONSIN STATE STATUTE(S):**

**347.06** When lighted lamps required. (1) Except as provided in subs. (2) and (4), no person may operate a vehicle upon a highway during hours of darkness or during a period of limited visibility unless all headlamps, tail lamps, and clearance lamps with which the vehicle is required to be equipped are lighted. Parking lamps as described in s. 347.27 may not be used for this purpose. This subsection does not apply if lamps that are automatically activated whenever the vehicle is started are in use, if the headlamps are of sufficient intensity to satisfy the requirements for daytime running lamps under 49 CFR 571.108, S7.10.13. (2) Headlamps need not be lighted on a towed vehicle or on a vehicle having at least 2 lighted adverse weather lamps on the front thereof and being operated under the circumstances described in s. 347.26 (3) (b). (3) The operator of a vehicle shall keep all lamps and reflectors with which such vehicle is required to be equipped reasonably clean and in proper working condition at all times.

**347.09** Headlamps on motor vehicles. (1) No person may operate a motor vehicle on a highway during hours of darkness or during a period of limited visibility, unless the vehicle is equipped as follows: (a) Except as provided in pars. (b) and (c), every motor vehicle shall be equipped with at least 2 headlamps, which headlamps shall comply with the requirements and limitations set forth in sub. (2) and s. 347.10 and shall be

mounted symmetrically with respect to the vertical plane extending through the longitudinal axis of the vehicle with at least one on each side of the center of the front of the motor vehicle.

**347.13:** (1) No person may operate a motor vehicle, mobile home, or trailer or semitrailer upon a highway during hours of darkness or during a period of limited visibility unless the motor vehicle, mobile home, or trailer or semitrailer is equipped with at least one tail lamp mounted on the rear which, when lighted during hours of darkness, emits a red light plainly visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear. No tail lamp may have any type of decorative covering that restricts the amount of light emitted when the tail lamp is in use. No vehicle originally equipped at the time of manufacture and sale with 2 tail lamps may be operated upon a highway during hours of darkness or during a period of limited visibility unless both lamps are in good working order. This subsection does not apply to any type of decorative covering originally equipped on the vehicle at the time of manufacture and sale. (2) Every tail lamp on a vehicle shall be located at a height of not more than 72 inches nor less than 20 inches. (3) No person shall operate on a highway during hours of darkness any motor vehicle upon the rear of which a registration plate is required to be displayed unless such motor vehicle is equipped with a lamp so constructed and placed as to illuminate with a white light the rear registration plate and render it clearly legible from a distance of 50 feet to the rear. Such lamp may be incorporated as part of a tail lamp or may be a separate lamp. (4) Tail lamps and registration plate lamps shall be so wired as to be lighted whenever the headlamps or auxiliary driving lamps are lighted. In a tractor-semitrailer combination, 2 switches may be employed, one to activate semitrailer lamps and one to activate tractor lamps.