

BE PEPARED

DRIVING ALONE

Driving alone, especially at night, can be a dangerous venture. Not only are solo drivers at a greater risk of falling victim to crime, violence or theft, they are also more susceptible to falling asleep behind the wheel. Additionally, if something does go wrong, solo drivers must know what to do because there isn't another passenger to consult for help. Before driving alone, especially in adverse weather or for a long trip, review the following tips.

- Have your vehicle professionally inspected by a mechanic, or perform a self-inspection if you feel comfortable, before setting out.
- Keep an emergency kit in the vehicle that includes items like jumper cables, blankets, water, a shovel, a traction mat and a flashlight with extra batteries.
- Always depart with a fully charged cellphone.
- On rest stops, always park in an open, well-lit area. Experts say motorists who travel alone are most vulnerable to becoming victims to crime when they are entering and exiting their vehicle.
- When walking toward your parked vehicle, have your keys in hand. If you see a suspicious person lurking nearby, walk in the opposite direction toward a public place.
- Avoid shortcuts through unfamiliar or unsafe areas, especially if you are lost and a stranger leads you there.
- Only accept directions from trusted sources and people, and never accept the offer of a stranger to lead you or take you to your destination.
- Be sure your vehicle is equipped with an alarm system.
- If something goes wrong with your vehicle and you are forced to stop on the side of the road, contact the police immediately, turn your emergency blinkers on, lock the doors and wait inside your vehicle for a squad car to arrive.

It is also important to know what to do in the event of an accident while traveling alone on business. There are several do's and don'ts when it comes to auto accidents that you should learn before departing. If accident preparation is not already part of your official training program and materials, request instructions from your supervisor before hitting the road.

