

Thanksgiving travel safety tips

The week of Thanksgiving is a busy time of the year to travel that's marked by a large number of people traveling to see loved ones. In 2017, AAA projected 50.9 million Americans would journey 50 miles or more from home on Thanksgiving. While many people look forward to seeing their loved ones, the sheer volume of cars on the road during Thanksgiving week makes it a dangerous time to travel.

A 2013 study examining the previous five years of data on traffic crashes in Alberta, Canada, found that long weekends have 18 percent more deadly accidents than non-holiday weekends. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Thanksgiving is the most dangerous holiday for driving. The most recent data available from NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System indicates that there were 764 crashes involving a fatality during Thanksgiving 2012. In comparison, there were 654 crashes involving a fatality during Christmas that year.

This Thanksgiving, drivers should make it a point to follow these tips to ensure they get to their destinations safely and soundly.

- **Check the forecast before you go.** Weather can be unpredictable around Thanksgiving. Conditions may be sunny one day and then cold and icy the next. Stay up-to-date on

the latest weather forecasts and road conditions as you prepare for your trip, making sensible decisions about traveling if there is inclement weather.

- **Get your vehicle inspected.** Have your vehicle inspected in the days before you hit the road. A mechanic's diagnostic checkup and routine servicing, such as topping off fluids and changing windshield wipers, can make driving safer.

- **Keep your fuel tank more than half-full.** FEMA suggests keeping the tank full when temperatures are extremely cold. This is because condensation can build up in near-empty gas tanks, potentially freezing fuel lines and leaving you stranded.

- **Opt for airline updates.** Flights can be delayed or canceled when weather is poor. Many airlines will now text travelers who are subscribed to updates or frequent-flyer programs and apps. That's a convenient and free bonus.

- **Plan for stops.** Drowsy driving and distracted driving are extreme dangers across North America. Take breaks to avoid drowsi-



ness, and only use a mobile device when safely pulled over at a rest stop.

- **Leave plenty of time.** There are bound to be many travelers come Thanksgiving week. Build extra time into your trip so you don't

have to speed or rush to make it on time.

Thanksgiving is a big travel holiday. Make it to family dinner safe and full of smiles by following various safety trips during your travels.

Greener ways to shop Black Friday



Carpooling to stores with friends on Black Friday can cut down on vehicle emissions and conserve fuel.

Thousands of shoppers eagerly await the arrival of Black Friday to grab big-ticket items and holiday season must-haves at bargain-basement prices. Shoppers who are braving the chilly temperatures of the early morning hours may have sales on their minds, but they can ensure Black Friday shopping suits their environmental ideals as well.

Team up

Come Black Friday, shoppers can travel to stores together to reduce the amount of vehicles on the road.

Carpooling or ridesharing to stores can prevent excessive vehicle emissions. Carpooling also has the added benefit of allowing drivers to utilize carpool lanes on major highways. This keeps cars moving at steady speeds, improving fuel efficiency and reducing the likelihood that fuel will be wasted while sitting in stop-and-go traffic.

Bring reusable tote bags

Black Friday shoppers shouldn't forget to pack tote bags among their shopping supplies. Reusable bags help cut down on the waste produced from plastic or paper shopping bags. Tote bags tend to be durable as well, which may make it easier for shoppers to carry around all of the items they purchase on Black Friday.

Look for minimal packaging

When making purchases, choose items that feature the least amount of packaging. Items with minimal packaging will result in a lot less waste making its way into landfills.

Bring along a coffee thermos

Waking up early in the morning can leave even the most seasoned early-risers feeling a bit bleary-eyed. Many such shoppers rely on a jolt of fresh-brewed caffeine to get moving. Shoppers can skip disposable coffee cups that fill up landfills and bring along their own reusable insulated mugs or thermoses. Some coffee vendors may even provide refills at discounted costs.

Opt for emailed receipts

Many retailers now give shoppers the option to have their receipts emailed to them. At checkout, consumers can click the button for an e-receipt, saving ink and paper. This option also may make it easier to organize and catalog receipts at home for budgeting or facilitating returns after Christmas has passed.

Black Friday is a day to score great deals, and shoppers do not need to compromise their eco-friendly values in their pursuit of the perfect presents.