

NOW HEAR THIS

You Need Good Ears on the Road

Next to your eyes, your ears probably are the most important of your sense organs. Like your eyes, you should make sure they're always in good condition.

Some sounds are danger signals. Hearing them and understanding what they mean are a part of driving safely.

Physical Exam

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (RMCSR) spell out exactly what a doctor should look for when he's giving you the required physical. The rules say he must look for evidence of mastoid or middle ear disease, any form of discharge and symptoms of aural vertigo, a feeling of dizziness which is caused by ear problems.

When he tests your hearing, he'll make sure you can hear a whispered voice at five feet, with or without a hearing aid.

It's okay to wear a hearing aid but it must be in good condition and functioning properly. Remember, you are required to carry a spare battery.

Know Your Equipment

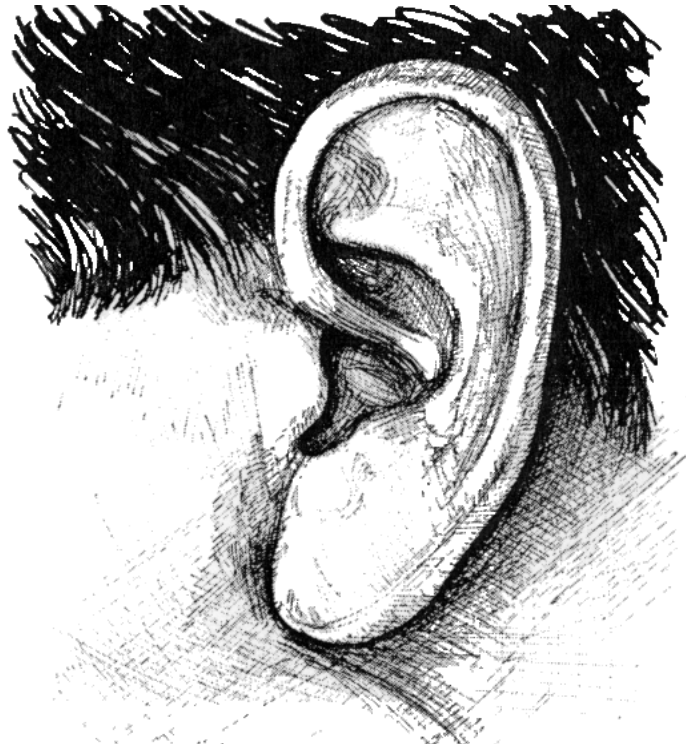
Your hearing can be a help in diagnosing equipment problems. It's possible you'll hear signs of transmission problems or engine failure before you'll feel them. By listening to your vehicle and learning what kind of noises it makes when it's in healthy running order, you may get early warning signals when mechanical problems are about to occur.

Road Noises

Your ears can alert you to dangers on the road. You'd be in big trouble, for instance, if you couldn't hear the siren of an emergency vehicle. Likewise, the sound of someone else's brakes alerts you to a possible hazard in your vicinity.

You have to be able to analyze the noises around you and act on the ones that could mean problems ahead. But you won't be able to hear these important sounds if the radio, CB or cassette player are too loud.

This, of course, is why a number of states have passed laws forbidding drivers from listening to music through earphones--a practice which the professional driver knows is clearly unsafe.



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Fatigue Fighter

Another way your ears can help you on the road is by helping fight against fatigue and stress.

If something's bothering you or you're feeling slightly tired, turn your radio on a little louder. It's stress that's getting you, try some soothing, relaxing music. If you're feeling a little tired, put on something lively and try singing along.

Keep your Senses

Never underestimate the importance of what you hear around you. Your hearing, like all other senses, must always be on the alert. Be aware of what it's telling you.