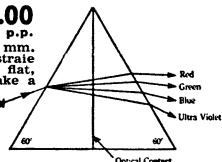


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PUBLIC SAFETY

Tinted-Windshield Danger

► "THIS AUTOMOBILE should not be driven by persons over 30 years of age."

This warning would appear on every automobile equipped with a tinted windshield, if Dr. Merrill J. Allen of the Indiana University division of optometry had his way.

Looking through a tinted windshield at night is just like knocking 25% off the power of your headlights, Dr. Allen said. And the effect on red brake lights and traffic signals ahead is even worse—more like 60%.

These effects are especially severe in people past 30, most of whom are subject to deteriorating vision that makes tinting a major handicap.

Aside from the tinting, Chrysler Corporation uses the poorest quality windshield glass of the American "big three," and General Motors the best. Dr. Allen told one of a series of auto safety hearings being conducted by Iowa Attorney General Lawrence F. Scalise in Des Moines, Iowa.

A few weeks ago, Dr. Allen checked all the new cars for sale in one midwestern city and found that 90% of them had wind-

shields with tinting that covered the entire glass area. In 16 of the 29 cars the windshields showed "noticeable and potentially hazardous distortions."

Tinted windshields are not the only light-hiding features of today's cars. Fenders, bumpers and grilles blocked side views of turn signals and brake lights in well over half the cars in the survey.

Amber light bulbs are commonly used in turn signals, though they offer less light than white ones.

Meanwhile, as the tinting and the trimming cut down light when it is needed, chrome plate and other shiny surfaces put more light in just the wrong place: the driver's eyes. Hood ornaments, inside windshield trim and corner posts, steering wheels and other parts are all sources of glare that could be eliminated by the use of flat finishes or brushed metal.

"The often heard argument that Americans won't buy safety seems to me to be purely academic," Dr. Allen said, "when safety is for the most part—visually at least—not available for sale."

• Science News Letter, 89:62 January 22, 1966

PUBLIC HEALTH

Reduce Blood Clot Deaths

► DEATHS from pulmonary embolism, or blood clot in the lung artery, can often be prevented by spotting and treating potential victims in advance.

A list of questions is suggested in Medical Times, January 1966, for patients about to undergo surgery or for those kept in bed because of other illness. Dr. H. F. R. Plass of the University of Minnesota Medical School says that most vein clotting, called thrombophlebitis, is so small that its presence is hypothetical.

The average person will not know he has had thrombophlebitis, and will start his hos-

pitalization with a major danger unrecognized. Clots in the legs can travel to the lungs and cause death.

The questions are:

1. Have you any varicose veins or phlebitis (vein inflammation)?
2. Have you ever broken your leg or had any other severe injury that put your leg in a cast?
3. Have you (if the patient is a woman) had trouble with leg clots after the birth of your babies? Have you had milk leg? Inflammation in the womb or Fallopian tubes?
4. Have you (if a man) had trouble with the prostate gland?
5. Have you had a pelvic or abdominal operation?
6. Have you had embolism?
7. Did you ever have blood removed from a large leg bruise?
8. Have you had a "Charley horse" that had to be operated on?
9. Is one foot colder than the other?
10. Have you had pleurisy?
11. Have you ever coughed up blood?
12. Does one leg swell?
13. Have you had dropsy?
14. Have you had pneumonia or any lung congestion after an operation?

Once the physician has identified patients who have had previous thrombophlebitis of any degree he can apply preventive measures, including anticoagulants, elastic stockings and the elevation of the foot of the bed where possible.

• Science News Letter, 89:62 January 22, 1966

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