

Staying Safe on Big Night

You are responsible for your own safety. On Big Nights, it will be dark, wet, and foggy, driving visibility will be dramatically reduced, and drivers may not expect to see people in the road. *Here's how to keep yourself safe.*

Shine A Light

Don't wait for the rain! Make sure you have a big light for Big Night, and enough batteries to keep it bright. Dim lights can vastly reduce both your ability to see critters and drivers' ability to see *you*. Headlamps are handy for keeping notes on how many salamanders you've crossed — and for making yourself extra visible to passing cars — but flashlights are key when it comes to looking for amphibians on the road. Many Crossing Brigade volunteers opt to use both.

Stay Alert

Driving visibility is dramatically reduced on rainy, foggy nights, and drivers may not expect to see pedestrians in the roadway. Keep your eyes and ears peeled for vehicles, and step off the road as soon as they come into view. In addition, it's quite likely there will come a time when you see a salamander in the headlights of an oncoming car, and feel tempted to dart into the road for a quick amphibian rescue. *Don't do it!* It's too easy to slip while running on wet roads or for salamanders to squirm out of your hands when you're in a rush, putting you in danger. **If a car is coming, step aside.**

COVID Considerations

Stay home if you've recently been exposed to COVID-19 or if anyone in your household is experiencing symptoms. If you're crossing critters with other people, wear a face mask over your mouth and nose, and stay at least six feet from anyone who's not in your pandemic pod. If your site is too crowded to maintain physical distancing, head home or to a quieter site. **Do not use hand sanitizer on Big Nights**, as it can be toxic to amphibians. Instead, wash your hands with soap and water before you head out and as soon as you get home after a night on the road.

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Wear a Reflective Vest

Wear a reflective vest. Wear a reflective vest.

Wear a reflective vest. (This one is really important.)

Advice for Families

Big Night can be a powerful experience for kids, but you'll need to take some extra precautions to keep young Crossing Brigadiers safe and sound. Wait until your children are elementary school-aged — and know how to be safe around traffic — before taking them to amphibian road crossings. Scope out your crossing site ahead of time to make sure it's family-friendly (wide shoulders, good visibility, street lights, slower traffic). On Big Night, make sure everyone in your group is wearing a reflective vest and carrying a light. Finally, maintain a 1:1 adult-to-child ratio *at all times*, with the primary responsibility of each adult being the safety of the child in their care.



photo © Tim Garceau

*This Crossing Brigadier is dressed for success: he's wearing a **reflective vest** and carrying two sources of **bright light** (a headlamp and a flashlight). He's also wearing a brimmed hat to keep the rain off his eyeglasses, so he can see well enough to remain **alert to traffic**.*