

# Fact sheet

## Polder Blindness

Polder blindness is caused by the absence of stimuli that keep you alert while driving. Dull, straight roads and a monotonous landscape can cause the driver to react less quickly to unexpected events in traffic, sometimes resulting in serious accidents and injuries. The Dutch polder roads are where this often occurs, hence the name 'polder blindness'.

## Combination of factors

Polder blindness usually occurs on quiet roads outside the main road network and can be caused by a number of factors or a combination of these:

- When the driver has driven the same road many times, carelessness and laconic driving may occur. New situations such as a fellow road user might be easily overlooked.
- Because intersections are usually at right angles and the speed of oncoming vehicles is almost the same, these vehicles can remain hidden behind the doorframe or mirrors for a longer period of time, or even stay completely hidden.
- The monotony of roads can cause thoughts to wander or mobile phones, eating and drinking, etc. can cause distraction.
- Beautiful landscape can pull the driver's attention off the road.
- High roadside vegetation can cause traffic at an intersection to be hidden from view.
- Many intersections in the polder area are located on dikes. Because traffic on the dike is higher than the traffic at the bottom of the dike, there is a chance that people will look over the roof of a vehicle.
- Low sun can decrease visibility and the glare can also cause a fellow road user to be completely hidden from view. The same applies to the reflection of a wet and slippery road surface.

## Solutions

Staying alert and conscious participation in traffic are the best solutions to prevent polder blindness. Below we give a number of additional preventive tips:

- Telephone use, eating and drinking and the operation of navigation or on-board computers should be avoided as much as possible in order to keep attention on the road.
- Wearing sunglasses or polarised glasses can help to have a better view of the road.
- Approach intersections carefully. You may not suffer from polder blindness yourself, but the other road user may. The consequences will be the same.
- Inform the road authority (often the municipality or province) about excessive roadside vegetation.



## Fatigue

Fatigue can come on suddenly as a result of exceeding driving or working hours, lack of sleep or, for example, the temperature being too high inside the vehicle. If you are tired, you are less alert and, as with polder blindness, your reaction time decreases. A boring environment, long and straight roads and little traffic can cause you to become drowsy and perhaps fall asleep. In addition to polder blindness, also recognise the signs and risks of fatigue in traffic. A healthy lifestyle with sufficient rest can prevent fatigue on the road. If fatigue does occur, a short 'powernap' of 15 minutes maximum will do wonders. But be careful: if you sleep longer, you will enter a different sleep phase, which will make you feel even more tired.



## Contact

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