

Throwing a lit cigarette out of a moving vehicle on a Nebraska roadway could result in a hefty \$500 fine and three months in jail. A second violation of this offense could result in a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail.

The reason for such severe penalties for littering is that lit cigarettes can easily start dangerous roadway brush fires causing extensive property damage and injuries, says AAA.

Drought conditions across most of the Midwest make this situation extremely hazardous. Dry grass can easily ignite and when combined with windy weather, a patch of grassland can turn into a blazing field in a matter of minutes. Roadside fires not only place fire and emergency personnel in danger, but other motorists, as well. Thick smoke can blind or obstruct a driver's view.

Motorists should approach such areas with extreme caution, warns AAA. Always reduce speed and turn on headlights when approaching these areas. If needing to brake or change lanes suddenly, refrain from any activities in the vehicle which are distracting.

Call 911 to report any unattended roadside fires, but do so only after safely passing the affected area. Some states are using creative means to warn motorists about this dangerous issue.