

DRIVING IN POOR WEATHER CONDITIONS

Even the most skilled driver cannot control the weather; however a defensive driver will make adjustments in order to maintain control of the vehicle. Below are some helpful suggestions for driving in poor weather conditions.

1. Prepare your vehicle – check the battery, windshield wipers, all fluid levels, belts and hoses, brakes, and tire condition for proper pressure and tread. Before driving in poor weather, clear ice and snow off windows, lights, hood, and roof of a car or truck cab if it safe to do so.
2. There is diminished visibility during bad weather, and daylight is shorter during winter months. Ensure that all the vehicle's lights are kept clean and functioning properly, to both enhance your visibility and so that you can be easily seen by others on the road. When driving in fog, remember to use low beams.
3. Adjust driving for poor weather conditions. When it is too hazardous to proceed, pull off to a safe place. Don't try to follow someone. Don't try to drive around or through a scene where other vehicles had trouble with road conditions.
4. When going over the top of a hill or around a curve, go at a speed that will enable you to bring the vehicle to a stop if the road ahead is not clear. When going downgrade, both loss of traction and gravity are working against you. Icy or snow covered pavement on downgrades are significant hazards which can cause the vehicle to slide or skid, so use extra caution.
5. Pay attention to traction and road surfaces. When roads are slippery look far ahead to anticipate conditions or emergencies that may require sudden maneuvering of the vehicle. Most skids on highways are caused by sudden stops or turning on slippery pavement. Allow more stopping distance and anticipate stops by slowing down gradually. Never brake hard or suddenly. Accelerate more gradually as well. Take turns slower than usual and don't over steer.
 - Intersections may be extra slippery because many cars stop and start in the same area.
 - Watch out for "black ice" that forms on asphalt roads. This is moisture which freezes after it settles in air pockets in the roadway, crating patches of ice barely visible to the eye.
6. Roads are often most slippery at the start of rainfall, when surface oil and grease are lifted to form a slick film that is not washed away until the rain has continued for a while. During wet conditions, avoid driving on the shoulder of any road. Undermining of the shoulder caused by water may cause you to lose control of the vehicle.
 - Remember that when temperatures are near freezing you may encounter water on the roadway, but ice on a bridge as temperatures on bridges are typically 5 – 10 degrees colder than the rest of the roadway
7. Hydroplaning occurs when the vehicle's tires lose contact with the wet roadway and actually ride on a thin layer of water. This is best controlled by reducing speed, and ensuring that tires are in good condition with adequate tread.
8. High winds make steering difficult. Slow down to control your vehicle. Watch for other vehicles swerving into your path.
9. In the event of a skid, don't panic – keep your foot off the accelerator and brake, and steer in the direction you want the vehicle to go until you regain control. If equipped with anti-lock brakes, press and hold the brake pedal.
10. Make sure your shoes are free from ice and snow so that your foot doesn't slip off the accelerator, brake, or clutch pedals. Use extra caution getting in and out of the vehicle as well.
11. Always allow additional clearance between yourself and other vehicles or fixed objects when maneuvering on bad road surfaces. Assume other drivers have less experience and skill than you, and give extra space for errors.
12. Most importantly, allow for additional time to reach your destination.

SLOW DOWN AND BE PREPARED