

## Wet Weather Driving Tips

Spring and summer showers may mean flowers, but wet pavement contributes to nearly 1.2 million traffic crashes each year. Here are some tips you'll want to follow the next time you're caught driving in the rain.



Safety starts before you drive, and your goal should be to see and be seen. Replace windshield wiper inserts that leave streaks or don't clear the glass in a single swipe. Make sure all headlights, taillights, brake lights and turn signals are properly functioning so other drivers will see you during downpours. Turn on your headlights whenever you drive.

Proper tire tread depth and inflation are imperative to maintaining good traction on wet roadways. Have your mechanic check tread depth and let you know when you need to replace them. Check each tire's pressure, including the spare, at least once a month... and be sure to check the pressure when the tires are cold.

### **Avoid Cruise Control**

Most modern cars feature cruise control. This feature works great in dry conditions, but when used in wet conditions, the chance of losing control of the vehicle can increase. To prevent loss of traction, the driver may need to reduce the car's speed by lifting off the accelerator, which cannot be accomplished when cruise control is engaged.

When driving in wet-weather conditions, it is important to concentrate fully on every aspect of driving. Avoiding cruise control will allow the driver more options to choose from when responding to a potential loss-of-traction situation, thus maximizing your safety.

### **Slow Down and Leave Room**

Slowing down during wet weather driving can be critical to reducing a car's chance of hydroplaning, when the tires rise up on a film of water. With as little as 1/12 inch of water on the road, tires have to displace a gallon of water per second to keep the rubber meeting the road. Drivers should reduce their speed to correspond to the amount of water on the roadway. At speeds as low as 35 mph, new tires can still lose some contact with the roadway.

To reduce chances of hydroplaning, drivers should slow down, avoid hard braking or turning sharply and drive in the tracks of the vehicle ahead of you. Also, it's important for motorists to allow ample stopping distance between cars by increasing the following distance of the vehicle in front of them and beginning to slow down to stop for intersections, turns and other traffic early.

### **Responding to a Skid**

Even careful drivers can experience skids. If a driver feels their car begin to skid, it's important to not panic and follow these basic steps:

- Continue to look and steer in the direction in which the driver wants the car to go.
- Avoid slamming on the brakes as this will further upset the vehicle's balance and make it harder to control.

If you feel the car begin to skid, continue to look and steer in the direction you want the car to go. Don't panic, and avoid slamming on the brakes to maintain control.

Overall you want to be extra cautious in wet weather. Slow down, avoid hard braking or turning sharply and allow ample stopping distance between you and the cars in front of you. Also, do these things one-at-a-time. Brake, then turn, then accelerate.

source: Exchange AAA (American Automobile association) <http://dev.exchange.aaa.com/safety/roadway-safety/wet-weather-driving-tips/>

### **Education and Training**

The Saskatchewan Safety Council offers various training and education related to safe driving. Every driver has had their vehicle in some type of skid at one point during their driving experience. Whether it was to stop the vehicle quickly and unexpectedly, swerving to avoid a potential hazard, or loss of control on the road surface, the situation was serious. Visit [www.sasksafety.org](http://www.sasksafety.org) or call 306.757.3197 to find out more.

### **Safety Talk Discussion**

**Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!**