

Best Practice Guide

Skids



Learn To Stay In Control

A skid occurs when the tyres of a vehicle lose their grip on the road. The main contributory factors to skids are hard braking, sudden steering, excessive speed and harsh acceleration.

A skid can be a frightening occurrence for a driver but can almost always be prevented via a number of incident prevention techniques.

Begin With The Triple A's

Avoid Aggressive Acceleration! Too much acceleration can lead to skidding and loss of control. The best way to avoid skidding is to stick to a safe speed and accelerate gradually and slowly.

Then Learn The Three S's

Slowly, Smoothly & Steadily! This applies to acceleration, braking and cornering. Never make jerky movements while driving as sudden actions can lead to skids.

Accelerating and decelerating gradually will also reduce engine wear, reduce fuel use and prolong the life of your brakes.

Be Kind To The Brakes

You cannot expect your brakes to work effectively and prevent you from skidding if you do not keep them in good condition. Check your brakes on a weekly basis before setting out on a journey.

To check brakes:

- Choose a safe area such as a driveway.
- Check mirrors and blind spots to make sure you are safe to proceed.
- Drive forwards slowly.
- Press the brake pedal firmly.

Take Care Of Your Tyres

Tyres that are worn, damaged, under or over inflated are likely to affect the handling of your vehicle and make skids more likely.

On a weekly basis you should check:

- Pressure.
- Tread depth.
- For damage such as cuts, splits and bulges.

Watch Your Speed

Reduce the chances of your vehicle skidding out of control by sticking to the speed limit and always driving at a speed appropriate to the conditions - especially on bends.

Be Calm Round Corners

Corners can be hazardous if tackled incorrectly and it is common for speeding drivers to lose control when taking bends too fast. If you are travelling at an inappropriate speed and brake while in the corner you will lose grip and are likely to skid out of control.

When approaching a corner:

- Apply brakes smoothly on the approach to the corner until your vehicle slows to an appropriate speed.
- Release the brakes before you begin to turn.
- Accelerate gently out of the corner.



Drive Defensively

Driving defensively can help you to avoid emergency braking situations which could lead to skidding.

Always:

- Stick to the speed limit or below if necessary.
- Scan the area around you regularly to look for 'clues' about the environment.
- Ease off the accelerator when driving near to potential hazards.
- Keep on high alert for unexpected hazards.
- Be prepared to brake if necessary.

Watch Out For Water

Wet roads make skids more likely as the water reduces friction between your tyres and the road surface resulting in 'hydroplaning'.

In wet weather:

- Reduce your speed.
- Remember that posted speed limits are for ideal conditions and that it takes at least twice as long to stop in the wet.
- Increase your following distance.

Be Cool On The Ice

Ice, snow and slush all drastically reduce the ability of your tyres to grip the road and it takes up to ten times as long to stop on an icy road compared to dry conditions. When driving in these conditions remember the three S's: Slowly, Smoothly & Steadily. Use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin, manoeuvre gently and avoid any harsh braking and acceleration.

To slow down on ice and snow:

- Get into a low gear earlier than normal.
- Allow your speed to fall.
- Use your brake pedal gently.

Be Prepared

Although the ideal scenario is to avoid skids completely, you should know what to do in the event of a skid to prevent you from making things worse.

If your vehicle starts to skid:

- Try to remain calm.
- Ease your foot off the accelerator.
- Avoid using the brakes.
- Carefully steer in the direction you want the front of the vehicle to go - this should bring the back of the vehicle in line with the front.

- S** Stick to a safe speed at all times.
- K** Keep tyres and brakes in a good condition.
- I** Icy, snowy and wet roads require extra skill and care.
- D** Drive defensively.
- S** Skids are common on corners.

WARNING

Skidding or loss of control on bends is a common contributory factor in head-on collisions.