

Best Practice Guide

ABS



Learn The Basics Of ABS

ABS is an abbreviation for Anti-lock Braking System. It works with the regular brakes on your vehicle and keeps your brakes from locking up when used in an emergency situation. This helps to prevent your vehicle from skidding in the event of rapid braking, especially on wet or slippery roads.

However, many drivers do not benefit from ABS because the correct techniques for using it are almost the complete opposite of the techniques taught about emergency braking in cars.

ABS can be a positive safety feature on vehicles, but only if used correctly.

Carry Out A Test

The most effective and safest way to trial your ABS system is to test drive your vehicle at a speed just above which the ABS activates (usually above 10 mph / 16 kph) in an unobstructed parking lot / car park. Drive the vehicle forward then apply the brakes firmly. It is easier to activate the ABS on a slippery surface so try to test drive the vehicle in wet conditions. The ABS system should prevent the wheels from skidding.

Don't Pump The Brakes

In vehicles without ABS the driver should manually pump the brakes in an emergency situation to prevent the wheels from locking up. This should not be done in a vehicle fitted with ABS because the system automatically pumps the brakes much faster than a driver would be able to.

In an emergency braking situation in an ABS equipped vehicle you should simply keep your foot pressed firmly on the pedal. Do not pump the brakes under any circumstances as this can reduce their effectiveness.



Don't Be Complacent

Whilst ABS has certain advantages, it does not replace the need for careful and sensible driving. ABS is designed to enhance the braking features of a vehicle, not replace the need for adequate stopping distances and safe speeds. Even if your vehicle is equipped with ABS it is still likely to skid out of control if you speed excessively, make sharp turns, drive aggressively or slam on the brakes

Steer Correctly

For ABS to work effectively it is vital that you steer normally in an emergency situation. Although it may be difficult, try not to panic and steer one way or the other suddenly. Make sure that, in particular, you avoid steering into oncoming traffic.



Keep Your Distance

ABS is not designed to make vehicles stop more quickly, but is designed to help the driver maintain control of the vehicle in an emergency situation.

ABS may make some vehicles stop more quickly in some situations and may shorten stopping distances, but in some situations, vehicles with ABS can actually take longer to

stop than ones without. For this reason it is important that you don't rely on ABS to help you stop more quickly. Always drive carefully and always keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front.

Be Prepared For Noise

There are a number of sensations and / or sounds that you might experience when stopping your vehicle using ABS. The sensations and sounds are not all the same and will vary from vehicle to vehicle. When you hear a noise or feel pulsations, make sure you DO NOT take your foot off the brake pedal, but instead continue to apply firm pressure.

Common sounds and sensations include:

- Rapid pulsation of the brake pedal.
- The sudden dropping of the pedal.
- A grinding or buzzing noise.



Beware Of The Road Surface

In gravel and deep snow, ABS tends to increase braking distances. This is because on such surfaces, locked wheels dig in and stop the vehicle more quickly. ABS prevents this wheel lock from occurring and can result in a vehicle taking longer to stop.

- A** ABS will only work efficiently if used correctly.
- N** Noises from the ABS system are normal.
- T** Test the ABS system in a deserted parking area.
- I** It is important that you steer normally.

- L** Let the ABS system take control of the 'pumping' of the brakes.
- O** On some surfaces it can take longer to stop with ABS.
- C** Complacency must not be allowed.
- K** Keep your distance

WARNING

Although most new vehicles are fitted with ABS you should never assume that your vehicle has it. Always check by reading your vehicle owner's manual or looking for an ABS indicator on your instrument panel.