

Best Practice Guide

Bad Weather



When The Weather Turns Bad

Heavy rain, snow, ice, fog, high winds and sleet are all common conditions which can make driving extremely hazardous.

Where possible driving in these conditions should be avoided, but this is not always an option, especially as bad weather can be unexpected.

There are many steps you can take to improve your safety when the weather is bad, starting before you even get in your vehicle.

Maintain Your Vehicle

Ensure that:

- Your vehicle is maintained/serviced correctly.
- Your battery is in good health. It has to work much harder in winter.
- Tires have good tread depth, are in good condition and are inflated correctly.
- Fluids are topped off.
- Windshield wipers and washers are working properly.
- Lights are clean and working.

Be Prepared

- Put off your trip if you can.
- Consult local and national TV and Radio for travel and weather information before setting out.
- Pack a breakdown kit that includes a flashlight, charged phone, warm clothing, blanket, food and water, shovel, ice scraper, tire chains, basic first-aid kit, emergency flares, and any additional emergency items required by law in your state/country.
- Ensure windows, mirrors and lights are clear from mist, frost and snow before setting out.
- Allow extra time for your trip.
- Let someone know your destination and expected time of arrival.

If You Get in Trouble

- If you break down or get stuck, stay with your vehicle if possible, until help arrives.
- If you have to leave your vehicle, make yourself visible to others.
- If you have to abandon your vehicle, give local police the details and park safely to avoid obstruction to maintenance vehicles such as snow plows.

Advice For Particular Weather Conditions

Heavy Rain

- Increase your following distance. Three-seconds is for good conditions, but it can take twice as long to stop on wet roads.
- Use dipped headlights to help other drivers see you.
- Watch out for large or fast-moving vehicles that create spray.
- Use air conditioning/heating to prevent your windows misting up.
- Be considerate of pedestrians and bicyclists – slow down as you pass through water.

Fog

- Slow down, keep your distance, and turn your lights on.
- Drive very slowly using dipped headlights. Use fog lights if visibility is seriously reduced, but remember to switch them off when visibility improves.
- Don't hang on the tail lights of the vehicle in front - this gives you a false sense of security and means you may be driving too close.
- Don't speed up suddenly - even if it seems to be clearing, you can suddenly find yourself back in thick fog.



Ice, snow and slush

- Drive slowly, allowing extra room to slow down and stop.
- It can take ten times longer to stop in icy conditions than on a dry road.
- Use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin, maneuver gently, and avoid harsh braking and acceleration.
- To brake on ice and snow without locking your wheels, get into a low gear earlier than normal, allow your speed to fall, and use the brake pedal gently.
- If you skid, ease off the accelerator but do not brake suddenly.
- Be aware that there might be stranded vehicles blocking the road.

Floods

It is best not to enter floodwater at all - if you can take an alternative route, do so. If you enter floodwater:

- Go through the water one vehicle at a time.
- Avoid the deepest water, which is generally near the curb. Don't attempt to cross if the water seems too deep. Watch others!
- Drive through slowly.
- Test your brakes a few times after you are through.

High winds

- Be extra careful when driving on exposed routes such as bridges or high open roads.
- Slow down, increase your following distance, and keep both hands on the wheel.
- Be prepared for strong/sudden winds when passing high-sided vehicles.
- Watch out for hazards up ahead including debris/objects that have been blown into the road.

- B** Be prepared before setting out.
 - A** Always keep your vehicle maintained.
 - D** Drive at a suitable speed for the conditions.
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- W** Watch out for hazards on the road.
 - E** Ensure you allow extra time for your trip.
 - A** Always check the weather forecast before setting out.
 - T** Try to increase your visibility to others.
 - H** Help others – look out for pedestrian and bicyclists.
 - E** Ensure to increase your following distance in bad weather.
 - R** Remember to pack a breakdown kit.

WARNING

Beware of 'aquaplaning' when roads are wet. This is caused when a layer of water builds up on the road surface and prevents the vehicle from responding to actions such as steering and braking.