

Be extra careful after a bout of rain has ended, when your wipers are off but when there is still water on the road. If spray hit in such circumstances then you would be effectively blinded until you have cleared your screen with your wipers

To keep spray to a minimum create a good distance between you and any vehicle that you follow. If you see a heavy vehicle coming towards you then switch the wipers to full speed in readiness of a large quantity of water hitting your windscreen.

Aquaplaning

In heavy or and in persistent rain, as the rain pools on the surface of the road aquaplaning becomes a serious risk. Aquaplaning is when the tyres surf the pooled water and in doing so lose contact with the road. This results in a loss of traction between tyres and road. You can tell this is happening if, when driving in the wet, your steering suddenly appears to be very light. The way out of an aquaplane is to gently release the accelerator. This slows your car allowing the tyres to regain traction with the road. Whilst aquaplaning never brake and avoid trying to steer. If you do you will be in danger of losing control of your car. Water on the road is not enough to cause a car to aquaplane—the depth of the water and the speed you are travelling at will determine that. If you are travelling at an appropriate speed for the conditions. i.e. not too fast, then you are unlikely to aquaplane.

Roadside Puddles

These can also be hazardous. As a wheel moves through a puddle drag is caused. This drag can tug at your wheels and cause you to swerve. You will also create spray that may cover your windscreen.

Dealing With Flooding

Flooding is on the increase. When confronted by a stretch of water blocking your way whether you drive on through the water depends on how deep it is, and you should always check before you drive through—observe cars coming in the opposite direction for example.

If you do decide to drive through that stretch of water then go slowly. Speeding through will create a wave that will rise up towards the engine and exhaust pipe. Use first gear and keep the revs high by slipping the clutch. This will reduce the chances of water entering the exhaust. Try and keep to the crown of the road if possible and if it doesn't cause danger to other drivers.—make your intentions clear!!



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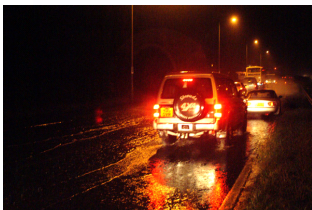
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More Hints and Tips for Safe Winter Driving

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SAFE

SNOW, FOG AND ICE

Winter weather can make driving a dangerous affair. When the weather turns bad and snow, ice or fog causes havoc on our roads the often quoted advice is simple - stay at home.

This maybe wise but in reality it is not always practical. With a little common sense however, the dangers of driving during winter months can be kept to a minimum.

Firstly as autumn draws to a close and the winter weather approaches give your car a little care and attention.....

Make sure your tyres have the correct tread depth. 1.6mm is the legal minimum but to cope with snow and ice it is advisable to have 6mm.

Check each car light to make sure all are operating correctly.

Make sure your car battery is fully charged and in good repair. Cold, wintry mornings can kill any battery that is past it best.

Fill up your windscreen washer reservoir with a good quality non freezing concentrate. A 50:50 water to concentrate mix is recommended.

Make sure your window wipers are in good condition. They will need to be in good repair if they are going to keep your windows clear.

If your car is due or nearing a service then take it in and get it checked out. If your car has any minor faults or is running out of essential fluids the winter weather will soon exaggerate them.

Buy a screen wiper and a can of de-icer and keep them in your car. It also a good idea to keep a well stocked first aid kit, a good quality, warm blanket and a torch with spare batteries in your car.



WINTER

As the winter progresses on you should: Keep as much fuel in your tank as possible. Winter weather can cause substantial delays. Running out of fuel whilst stuck in a long traffic jam can be unpleasant and above all dangerous.

Keep your mobile phone fully charged. You may need it to call for help. If you drive into bad weather listen to the local radio station for up-to-date travel news.

Snow fall and ice covered roads can render driving almost impossible. If you get caught in such conditions follow these rules.

When steering turn the steering wheel gently and progressively. Never snatch at the wheel turning it sharply as this can cause you to skid and lose control.

When accelerating do so gently. Accelerate too harshly and your wheels will spin.

Reduce your speed and avoid sudden braking. Whenever possible use your engine brake by changing down into lower gears.

Increase the gap between you and the vehicle in front. With snow and ice on the road stopping distance can increase 10 fold.

Keep your car in a high gear as this will help prevent wheel spin.

DEALING WITH FOG

The award for most dangerous weather condition goes to fog. When fog is at its worst you should park somewhere safe and wait for it to pass. However if you find yourself driving in fog:

Reduce your speed, turn your headlights to dip and if visibility is less than 100m turn on your fog lights. If the fog suddenly clears don't relax, don't think you're out of danger.

DRIVING

Don't use your rear fog-lights if the visibility allows you to see more than 2 car lengths in front of you as drivers behind will be dazzled and will not see your brake lights.

Fog is usually quite patchy going from a light mist to a thick cloud in a matter of metres. You could turn a corner only to find yourself in a dense blanket of fog. Turn on your front and rear wipers and your demisters. Keep alert. Other drivers may fail to drive in an appropriate manner neither using their lights or reducing their speed.

RAIN AND WET WEATHER

When driving in rain or when the road is wet your ability to stop will be reduced. In such conditions stopping distance will increase by a factor of two. The two second rule becomes the four second rule. Or even more.....

To compensate for this reduce your speed and increase the distance between you and any vehicle in front.

Even with your windscreen wipers on, rain can obscure the view through your windscreen. The problem is made worse when windows begin to mist over. To ease such problems:

- Keep your windows clean. Clean windows are less likely to mist over.
- Use a quality windscreen washer fluid.
- When windows start to mist turn on your air-con or heater fan.
- Replace ineffective wipers.
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Deal With Spray

Water from the sky is not the only problem. Water that is forced up from the road as vehicles drive over it can also cause hazards. SPRAY! Spray can, in a split second, cover your windscreen and reduce visibility to almost zero. Heavy vehicles such as trucks and buses cause the most spray but even a small family sized car travelling at a normal speed can produce enough spray to cause a hazard.

