

# TIPS FOR DRIVING IN INCLEMENT WEATHER

## Floods and Rushing Waters

- Obey all signs and emergency personnel.
- If road-side trees, shrubs and signs look too low, slow down immediately.
- Driving into this situation at high speed is similar to driving into a wall – the car will stop, you will be thrown forward.
- Never drive through flooded roadways.
  - As little as 6 in. of water will carry you away.
  - As little as 2 ft. of water will carry a car away, even an SUV.

## Driving in the Rain

At some point you will get caught in the rain.

- Drive slower than usual.
- Turn on headlights (even in daytime).
- Turn on windshield wipers.
- Make sure outside windows and mirrors are clear of debris.
- Be cautious when changing speed and direction.
- Make smooth hand & foot movements.
- DO NOT drive through pools of water.
- Stay in the middle lane of multi-lane highways as water collects on the outside of the lane.

## Driving in the Fog

- Slow down.
  - Check speedometer.
  - Go slower than speed limit.
- Turn on low beams, wipers, & defroster.
- Scan the road for other drivers.
- Watch for pedestrians and animals.
- Crack the window.
- Turn off the radio.
  - Listen for other cars engines.
- Smoothly brake and steer.
- Turn on emergency flashers
- Look for a safe place to pull off the road until your visibility improves.

## Getting Stuck in a Blizzard

Do not leave the car unless you are certain there is shelter within 100 yards. White out conditions cause you to become disoriented and lost.

- Call for help on cell phone.
- Tie a bright colored cloth to the top of your antenna.
- Start the engine, turn on the interior light and heater for about 10 minutes each hour.
- Be aware of carbon monoxide poisoning
  - keep exhaust pipe clear
  - open window slightly as a vent
- Attempt to move within your vehicle to avoid hypothermia and frostbite.
- Use newspapers, maps, and car mats for insulation.

## General Rules for Handling Skids

- If you remember nothing else:  
**DO NOT BRAKE**
- Braking only makes skidding worse
  - the wheels lock and you lose all control
- Steer in the direction you want to go
- If the rear tires are skidding to the left, steer left.
- If the rear tires are skidding to the right, steer right.

You may need to “correct” several times to regain control. **DO NOT OVERCORRECT.**

## What to do if You Begin to Hydroplane

### DO NOT PANIC

- Sudden moves will most likely make you lose control of the car.
- Keep both hands firm on the steering wheel.
- Ease foot off the accelerator.
- Do not slam on the brakes.
- If you must stop, gently press brake to reduce speed.
  - Hard braking will result in total loss of control.
- Steer in the direction you want to go.

This situation does not usually last long so keep your focus on the road and where you want the car to go.

## Winter Driving Strategies

- Increase following distance to at least 8-10 seconds
- DO NOT be overly confident in 4-wheel drive vehicles just because they can get through conditions easier, it does not mean they can stop in time
- Always decrease speed
- Use extra caution on bridges and overpasses
- Turn on headlights
- Avoid trucks
- Avoid any fast or sharp movements
- Accelerate gently
- Turn slowly
- Brake carefully and early

## Stopping or Braking on Ice

With ABS Brakes:

- Maintain minimal pressure on the brakes.
- Steer in the direction you want to go.
- Do not shift into lower gear
  - Rear wheels may spin
  - The car will travel sideways
- If you begin to slide
  - Hold steering wheel firmly
  - Use very little motion to keep car on the road or your car may begin to sway back and forth uncontrollably (Fishtail).
- Do not over apply brakes
  - If you feel the brake “pulse”, your antilock brakes are working.
  - If you do not feel the brakes “pulse” you should apply more pressure.
- Accelerate the gas once you are off of the ice and the car is straight.

## Sliding in the Snow

- Do not slam on the brakes.
- Ease off the accelerator
- Apply brakes gently.
- Steer in the direction you want to go.
- Be ready to correct in case you start to slide in the opposite direction.
- Remain calm, do not over correct.

## Getting Stuck in the Snow

DO NOT over accelerate the gas, your tires will spin and you will create ditches under your tires.

- Put car in park
  - w/ the emergency brake on.
  - DO NOT turn the car off.
- Apply kitty litter or sand to the areas in front and in back of all tires.
- Rock vehicle slightly.
  - Drive and Reverse
  - Do not spin the wheels
- Do not rev the engine above 35 mph.
- Make sure no one is standing near the car as you attempt to move it.

If all else fails, call a tow truck.

## Maintaining Traction in the Snow

Automatic Transmission:

- Put car in D2 and accelerate gently.
- Shift car to D once car is moving.

Manual Transmission:

- Use a higher gear (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>) with which you can move the car without stalling.
- Accelerate gently.

Once you are moving:

- Try to keep wheels moving without spinning, slower speeds are essential to do this.
- When driving downhill, shift to a lower gear to keep car in control.

## Off Road Recovery

- Ease off gas pedal.
- Ensure wheels on same side of vehicle are on same surface. (i.e. both right wheels on shoulder)
- Car should straddle road and shoulder.
- Keep firm grip on steering wheel.
- Soft or wet shoulder will pull car.
- Continue slowly, until car is traveling between 10 & 25 mph.
- Scan shoulder area ahead to ensure it is clear.
  - If not, slow vehicle to a stop to avoid hitting obstacles on shoulder.
  - Once vehicle is under control and assuming shoulder is clear, then you check for approaching traffic in mirrors as well as over the shoulder.
  - Signal intention to move back into traffic.
- Once road is clear:
  - Steer gently back onto road surface until all wheels are secure.
  - Straighten out carefully
  - Accelerate to speed of traffic

## Emergency Situations

What is important in an emergency?

- Be prepared. Early awareness is critical.
- A quick reaction time can save your life.

Control your:

- Attitude
- Emotions
- Response

Remember to:

- Breathe