



Driving on wet or flooded roads

Thousands of vehicles have been damaged and drivers injured or worse whilst driving in rain or on flooded roads. Many of these incidents can be avoided if drivers are aware of the conditions and follow some simple best practice to ensure a safe journey. Below are a few tips that should reduce the risk when driving on wet or flooded roads. I hope you find the information useful.

Before you set off - All motorists should regularly check that their headlights, side lights, brake lights and indicators are working properly and that all windows are clean (clean windows are less likely to mist-up) and the windscreen wipers are in good condition. Tyres are a major contributing factor in many wet weather crashes, they should be checked for pressure and tread depth on a regular basis. Listen to local weather forecasts so you know what conditions to expect and if necessary, make alternative arrangements to avoid areas likely to suffer flash flooding.

Misted up windows - If your car is equipped with air conditioning then turn it on and direct the airflow to your windscreen and side windows with the fan on its highest setting. In a car without AC the procedure is the same, but you may need to wait longer for the windows to clear.

Turn on your lights - Whenever visibility is poor or it rains, dipped beam headlights are a good way to let other drivers know where you are. As a rule of thumb if you need your wipers on all the time, then you should turn your headlights on.

Road Surface – Rain is most dangerous when it falls after a dry spell on to roads that have become polished and smooth: the rain blends with oil and rubber-dust deposits on the road surface to form a highly dangerous skid mixture.

Aquaplaning – Happens when the water in front of your tyres builds up faster than your car's weight can push it out of the way. The water pressure causes your car to rise up and slide on a thin layer of water between your tyres and the road.

Using Cruise Control in Heavy Rain - It is recommended by some that cruise control should not be used in conditions where there is a possibility of aquaplaning.

Handling a skid - Losing control of your car on wet road at speed is a frightening and extremely dangerous experience. If you find yourself in a skid you should try to regain control by quickly steering into the skid.

Motorway and High-Speed Driving in Rain – You're supposed to leave a two second gap between you and the vehicle in front in dry weather on a good road surface. You need to at least double this in wet weather (at least four seconds).



Driving Through Deeper Water - Where water has flooded onto the road, drive very slowly and cautiously. Never drive through fast moving water if you can't see the ground through it. Watch out for manhole covers or drain grids that have been dislodged by the water flow. Once you have successfully negotiated the deep water, don't forget to test your brakes. They may be saturated, and only by driving very slowly and braking lightly will generate enough heat to dry them out. Be sure they are pulling evenly on all wheels before building up speed again.

Don't drive while fatigued – Driving in heavy rain or flash flood conditions takes a lot of concentration and it can be very tiring. It is important you take regular rest breaks.

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