



0003101

Weather conditions like rain, wind, snow, ice, sleet, and fog increase risk when drivers have to get behind the wheel.

Postponing a drive until the worst of the weather has passed is ideal, but for those who must drive, or are already on the road, there are plenty of tips that can help drivers reach their destination safely.

When driving in bad weather, the two most important safety precautions drivers can take is to **slow down** and **stay back**.

- Driving slower helps decrease the likelihood of skidding, hydroplaning, and accidents.
- Reduce your speed by 1/3 on wet roads and by 1/2 or more on roads with ice or snow.
- Brake time can be slower in bad weather, so leave more room in front of your vehicle than you usually do.

This safety topic provides reminders for experienced drivers who find themselves on the road in poor weather conditions.

Stay on top of auto maintenance to ensure the vehicle you are driving doesn't cause more problems in bad weather.

- Replace old windshield wipers, lights that aren't working, and worn-out brake pads.
- Clean dirty headlights.
- Make sure tires have adequate tread and the tire pressure is at the recommended level.
- Never let the fuel level get too low.
- Stay up-to-date on oil changes and other routine maintenance.



0003102

Plan ahead before getting on the road, especially when bad weather is in the forecast.

- Allow extra time to reach your destination without feeling anxious or stressed because weather or traffic conditions may slow you down.
- Learn alternative routes so you are prepared if roadways become impassable.
- When renting or driving a fleet vehicle, become familiar with the controls and blind spots before starting your drive.
- Pack an emergency roadside kit, drinking water, and snacks.
- If you are using a cell phone for navigation, set that up before you drive to avoid distracted driving, which can be especially dangerous in bad weather.

When the weather turns wet, it's not just the **rain** that can be a problem for drivers. Lightning flashes, high winds, decreased visibility, rising water levels, and the risk of hydroplaning can all create opportunities for roadway crashes.

To keep yourself and other motorists safe when driving in rainy weather, follow these precautions:

- Turn on the vehicle's headlights, even in the daylight, to increase visibility.
- Never attempt to drive through flooded areas. If you do drive up to an area of the road that is covered by water and you cannot see the ground beneath the water, turn around.
- Do not follow larger vehicles, like trucks or buses, too closely because they can create a splash of water large enough to cover your windshield.
- Drive in the middle lane, when possible, because rainwater tends to pool on the outer edges of the road.
- Always give other vehicles plenty of room on the road.



0003103

Hydroplaning happens when the water in front of the tires builds up faster than the vehicle's weight can push water out of the way. The water pressure causes the vehicle to rise and slide on a thin layer of water which can result in dangerous skidding or drifting.

- If you do experience a scary moment of hydroplaning while driving, do not make any sudden moves with the steering wheel. Instead, take your foot off the accelerator until the vehicle slows and the tires can get traction again. Tap the brakes gently as needed to regain control.

**Sleet, snow, and ice** can cause dangerous driving conditions during the winter. Pay attention to the local weather forecasts and use caution if you have to get on the road in freezing weather.

- Bridges, ramps, overpasses, and shaded areas are the first to freeze in cold weather. Slow down on these sections of the roadway or avoid them if possible.
- Black ice is a thin, transparent layer of ice on a roadway that can cause drivers to lose control quickly. Be aware when black ice could be a problem, stay focused, and avoid areas that look slick.
- Keep an emergency kit in the car along with extra food, drinking water, and a warm blanket. If you become stranded in the winter, stay in your vehicle and call for help.



0003104

When driving on icy roads, it's easy to find yourself in a skid when your wheels lose traction.

The most important thing to do if you start to skid is to remain calm and not make any sudden moves that can send the vehicle into a spin.

- Remove your foot from the accelerator to slow the spin of the tires.
- Do not slam on the brakes, but instead gently tap the brakes.
- Avoid oversteering, but gently guide the position of the vehicle to ensure you don't lose control.

**Fog** is dangerous because it can significantly reduce visibility for drivers. If driving in fog cannot be avoided, do what you can to stay safe on the road.

- Only use low-beam headlights and turn on fog lights, if available. Don't use high-beam headlights in fog because they can reflect the light off of the fog and actually make it more difficult to see.
- In dense fog you can turn on emergency flashers to make your vehicle more visible to other drivers who are driving behind you.
- When visibility is low, use the white reflective line on the right edge of the road as a guide.
- Always watch for slow-moving vehicles and parked vehicles.
- Avoid changing lanes or passing vehicles.



0003105

Additional safety precautions for driving in bad weather:

- Turn off cruise control and remain in control as you pay attention and stay focused.
- Use turn signals early to give plenty of notice to other drivers before you start to slow down.
- Avoid sharp or quick turns which can lead to skids and accidents.
- Avoid hard braking but instead lightly tap the brake to stop.
- Pull over if you need to for any reason... if the weather gets worse, if visibility becomes a problem, or if you experience increased fatigue. If possible, pull into a rest area, truck stop, or parking lot.

## COPYRIGHT AND DISCLAIMER

This material is the copyrighted property of Weeklysafety.com, LLC. Purchase of this material from Weeklysafety.com, LLC grants the owner the right to use this material for workplace safety and education purposes only. Use of this material for any other purpose, particularly commercial use, is prohibited. This material, including the photos, may not be resold. Weeklysafety.com, LLC does not warrant or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed in these materials. Photos shown in this presentation may depict situations that are not in compliance with applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety requirements. These materials are meant for informational purposes only and it is not the intent of Weeklysafety.com, LLC to provide compliance-based training. The intent is more to address hazard awareness in the construction and related industries, and to recognize the potential hazards present in many workplaces. These materials are intended to discuss Federal Regulations only, as individual State requirements may be more stringent. Many states operate their own state OSHA and may have standards that are different from information presented in this training. It is the responsibility of the employer and its employees to comply with all pertinent OSHA safety rules and regulations in the jurisdiction in which they work.

## PHOTO ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Unless specified below, all photos are the copyrighted property of Weeklysafety.com, LLC and may not be used in any other training materials or resold for any purpose.

- 0003101 – 0003105 Shutterstock License for Weeklysafety.com

For more information on this weekly safety topic, other topics that are available and the full list of FAQs please visit [www.weeklysafety.com](http://www.weeklysafety.com) or email [safety@weeklysafety.com](mailto:safety@weeklysafety.com).