



Safety Focus



VEHICLE INSURANCE POOL

December 2008

Winter Driving

WINTER IS UPON US AGAIN, bringing fog, wet roadways, and poor visibility. The following are some tips for driving safely in winter conditions:

Now is the time to reflect on winter driving to prepare yourself for adverse road conditions.

FOG can obscure visibility and depth perception. Observe the following precautions:

- Use windshield wipers and defrosters. Turning on the air conditioner when you use the defroster helps prevent the fog from getting worse.
- Reduce your speed and increase following distance from the cars in front of you.
- Turn on your headlights (fog lights or low beams only) to see better and to be seen.
- Fog can grow dense instantly. Reduce your speed gradually, as drivers following you may fail to see your brake lights.

HYDROPLANING occurs when excessive water on the roadway causes the tires to lose traction, resulting in the vehicle skidding. To avoid hydroplaning and skids:

- Inspect tires for wear and proper inflation. Adequate treads prevent hydroplaning by channeling the water through the tire's grooves.
- When it begins to rain, immediately reduce your speed without applying the brakes. The first 10-15 minutes after it begins to rain are the most dangerous; roadway dust and oil combine with the water to create a slick surface, which will eventually wash away.
- When braking on a very slick road, shift to neutral gear and press the brake pedal down gradually. When in neutral, all four wheels will brake equally since none of the wheels are receiving power.
- Increase your following distance on slick roads, but stay in the "tire tracks" of the vehicle ahead. The water on the roadway will be channeled away through the grooves.

CALL DON at 877-551-6717 for help with managing any special challenge on the road!

RESPONDING TO A SKID:

- Ease off the accelerator, but do not brake. Braking will only make the skid worse.
- Correct a skid by steering toward your intended path. The longer you wait, the more the vehicle will slide out of your intended path.
- Make steering corrections gradually and smoothly. Overcorrecting can result in a counter-skid, either a fishtail (when your rear wheels skid back and forth) or a spinout (your rear wheels lose all traction and the vehicle spins around).
- Make steering corrections continuously. As soon as the skid begins to change direction, counter steer to center the vehicle on the path of travel. Continue correcting until you are out of the skid and back in control.
- Scan constantly for the conditions ahead and to the sides of your vehicle.




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