

Driving in Inclement Weather

Bad weather affects all roads - no matter how well they may be constructed. The interstate system is a marvelous example of modern engineering, but no matter how good the road is, it is still dangerous when there is sleet, snow or ice on the roadway, or when the highway is wet due to rain. While driving in bad weather, you should be more cautious and certainly reduce your vehicle's speed on slippery roadways.

When road conditions are slippery, drivers must look further ahead so they can anticipate emergencies and avoid the need for sudden maneuvers. Most skids are caused by last-second stops and turns on slippery pavement, and many times speed is a definite factor in a driver losing control of their vehicle on a wet road.

You must take extra care on hills. Brake over the top of blind hills at a speed that will permit you to bring your vehicle to a stop safely in case the highway ahead isn't clear. You need to keep in mind that on a downgrade, both the loss of traction and gravity are working against you.

Don't attempt to drive around or through a scene where other vehicles have obviously had trouble with the road conditions. The same conditions that caused their trouble may still be there when you arrive. When there is no room to get through, you must be prepared to stop.

If you're going on a long trip, make sure you get plenty of rest beforehand. Fatigue is a major cause of accidents, and falling asleep at the wheel has killed or injured many people. An old safety practice used by many over-the-road truck drivers is to keep a window slightly open to allow fresh air to enter the vehicle. This practice can assist in keeping you awake on a long drive. Remember, it's far better to pull to the side of the road and rest if you're tired than to push yourself and fall asleep while driving.

After all precautions have been taken and good practices are followed, there will still be occasions when conditions become too hazardous to proceed. Good drivers will pull off the highway at the first safe place and wait until conditions improve before continuing. Don't be a statistic! Use caution and slow down while driving in inclement weather. Be safe whether driving for work or for yourself!