

# 13 Tips For Driving Safely In Bad Weather



Sometimes when the weather is rough, you simply do not feel as safe while driving around, and for the new driver, that can be pretty nerve-wracking especially if, when you took your [road test](#), the weather was great.

So, here are a few tips to help you get on with driving, even when the weather is rotten!

To begin, let's go through some of the more common types of bad weather.

## Heavy Rain

There are two main factors that you should consider when driving in the rain, these are:

## **Visibility:**

While rain itself does not completely obscure drivers vision; if it is given a chance to build-up on the driver's window, then it certainly will cause visibility issues.

Luckily there is a simple solution, and that is to use your window wipers. Set the speed as appropriate, to ensure that the rain doesn't build-up enough to obscure your view.

This might sound obvious, but many cars these days have automatic wipers that start when rain is sensed, so familiarise yourself with the car's controls before the rain starts!

## **Grip:**

Of the two, the difference in grip is often what frightens people more when driving in heavy rain. This is because the driver often feels they don't have complete control of the vehicle.

A general rule of thumb for driving in wet conditions is to drive calmly.

This means try to avoid harsh acceleration as that is what often causes you to lose your grip.

Another useful tip is to ensure you are keeping the correct separation distance between vehicles while driving in heavy rain.

To help you visualise this, we recommend using what is known as the 4-second rule.

Essentially, this is a rule that you apply when driving in rainy conditions.

The rule requires you to look ahead and make sure that you are at a 4-second reaction distance to the vehicle in front.

By giving yourself 4 seconds to react, which is twice the normal distance of 2 seconds, it allows you to safely come to a stop, without having to worry about the loss of grip due to harsh braking, because you will be able to brake with plenty of time.

## **Fog**

As you probably guessed, the biggest hazard in foggy conditions is reduced visibility.

While we cannot give you fog vision to help you see through the fog, we can tell you the best tips for keeping safe when driving in foggy conditions.

### **Which Lights?**

First of all, it is extremely important that you don't use your high beam lights.

This is because fog is made up of small water droplets, which means high beam lights will reflect off them, and reduce your overall visibility.

Fog lights, however, are a crucial part of driving in the fog.

Not only will they increase visibility, but it will allow other drivers to spot you more easily.

Note that using your fog lights when the fog has cleared is illegal. So be sure to turn your fog lights off once the fog has cleared.

### **Speed:**

While car control is the same in foggy conditions, due to the lack of visibility, you should always adjust your speed when driving in it.

To put it simply, go slow! Sure it will take you longer to get

to your destination, but it is not worth the risk of travelling at high speeds when you can see so little.

## Ice

Ice is generally the most dangerous of the conditions, this being because grip is severely reduced when on ice.

However, the biggest difference between ice and the other weather conditions is that ice is typically located in small patches on the road, whereas other conditions affect the entire road surface.

Furthermore, ice does not affect visibility, so you will be able to see the danger and act accordingly.

On straight roads, ice is much less of a threat, because you often don't need to slow down and accelerate like you would on a curved road.

This means that your only concern should be if you need to brake on the ice. If a situation presents itself where you might find that you have to slow down, but there is ice in front, simply begin slowing down before the ice, so that you do not have to brake sharply.

As for corners, we recommend the same strategy used in fog, that being, go slow!

There is no need to put you or others at risk to get around a corner slightly faster.

Slow down on your approach, then simply accelerate again when it's safe to do so.

Now that we have covered the more common weather conditions, it's time to move on to some slightly more obscure conditions.

These conditions are often less frequent than the previous ones mentioned, however, can still pose a threat if not taken

seriously.

## Heat Wave

You might be thinking, how does a heatwave affect my driving? Well, it's less about the road surfaces and more about how it affects you as a driver.

Heat Waves often last the entire day, if not multiple, so you must be taking the right steps as a driver to ensure you are fit to drive in these conditions.

### **Hydration:**

One of the best things you can do for yourself on a hot day is to ensure that you are drinking plenty.

This will help to keep your body energised, and allow you to function somewhat normally through the strenuous heat.

### **Airflow:**

Next on the list is to ensure your vehicle has sufficient airflow. It will do you no good sitting in still hot air for prolonged periods.

It will also cause you discomfort, which will undoubtedly affect your driving.

To ensure airflow is sufficient, open a window or two while travelling to allow the air in.

Alternatively, if you have air conditioning, you can use that to help cool off too.

### **Alertness:**

Heat often makes people feel drowsy and exhausted, which are not favourable feelings to have while driving.

So that is why it is important to ensure that you are alert

while driving.

Both tips on how to stay alert, relate to the previous two points.

First of all, stay hydrated! This will help your body in combating the heat.

Secondly, open a window. Let the air get to your face; this feeling will undoubtedly help to reduce the drowsiness caused by the heat. This also works with air conditioning, as the cold air will have a similar effect.

## **Mud**

Mud is less common than you think due to the fact that the mud often dries before it can become a problem.

However, in some places, such as country or dirt roads, there may be larger quantities of mud, look out near entrances to fields and farms.

The two most useful tips for driving through mud are about the depth of the mud, and the speed you go through the mud at.

### **Depth:**

As for the depth of mud, you can usually tell by looking at it whether it is shallow or deep.

If you see any signs of deep spots in the mud, it is always worth getting out the vehicle to check, as the last thing you want to do is end up stuck!

To do this simply grab a stick or any object of length nearby, then test the mud from a safe spot.

If you do find that there is a deep spot, then be sure to avoid driving over this spot, as it will have the highest chance of you getting stuck.

However, if the entire puddle of mud is deep, then we suggest you take an alternate route if possible.

## **Speed:**

First, let's start with the gears.

You typically want to use 2nd or 3rd gear to travel through mud, as it allows you to go at a steady pace, that won't make your wheels will spin too fast, and start to dig down.

As for your approaching speed, you want to be going at a steady speed, and let your momentum take you as far as possible. Sudden changes in speed will cause the tires to spin and make you lose grip.

If you do find that you need to accelerate or brake in the mud, be sure to do so gently, so you don't start to skid.

That wraps up our list of tips on how to drive safely in bad weather.

Hopefully you learned something new today, and feel more confident in your ability to drive in said weather conditions.