



# Toolbox Talks

## Driving in Bad Weather



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 usual.

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:

- 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.

**Fog** is dangerous because it can significantly reduce visibility for drivers.

- Only use low-beam headlights and turn on fog lights, if available. Don't use high-beam headlights when driving in foggy weather.
- 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.

**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 road 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.

