

Winter Driving Fact & Tip Sheet

The winter combination of cloudy skies, rain, fog and snow leads to thousands of crashes every year. In 1997 there were over 3,200 weather-related collision deaths and almost 186,000 weather-related injuries.

Preparing for Bad Weather Driving

- Always drive slower than usual in poor weather and allow extra time to reach your destination.
- Leave extra space between you and the vehicle ahead of you - your car needs three times more space to stop on wet roads. As a general rule, maintain a distance of six to eight seconds between your vehicle and the one in front of you.
- To avoid skidding, refrain from using brakes often. When necessary, apply brakes gently. If your vehicle does skid, don't hit the brakes. Ease off the accelerator and steer into the direction of the skid.
- In the fall, make sure your tires have plenty of tread left on them, your windshield wipers are in good condition and you have a full supply of windshield washer fluid.
- Before embarking on a long trip in bad weather conditions, make sure your gas tank is full, the defroster is working, muffler and exhaust are in good condition and there is antifreeze in the radiator.
- Carry tire chains and tightners, small shovel and flares in your trunk. Also bring a flashlight, a windshield scraper and blanket.
- If you are having car trouble, turn on your hazard lights and pull off the road as far as possible to the right. Light flares, call or signal for help and stay in your car unless it is in danger of getting hit by other vehicles.
- Always call ahead for road conditions:
 - 1-800-427-7623 for CA road conditions within the state (CHIN)
 - 1-916-445-1534 for CA road conditions outside of the state
 - 1-702-793-1313 for Nevada road conditions
- Check weather conditions on internet:
 - www.chp.ca.gov
 -

www.dot.ca.gov

Driving in Rain

PCOC Insurance Program
www.pcocinsurance.com

- Drive with your headlights on.
- Apply brakes more slowly - they may pull.
- Don't speed up when driving through standing water - doing so may cause tires to lose contact with the road (hydroplaning). If you do hydroplane, hold the steering wheel steady and lightly apply the brakes. After your wheels regain contact with the road, slow down until you have full control of the car.

Driving in the Fog

- It is illegal to drive without your headlights on - do not drive with just your parking or fog lights on; you must use your low beam headlights.
- Reduce speed significantly to prepare for reduced visibility. In Tule fog, visibility can deteriorate in as little as 1/8 of a mile (660 feet) or less.
- Do not stop on the freeway unless it is an emergency.
- Do not pass lines of traffic unless absolutely necessary.
- Listen for traffic you cannot see.
- If possible, postpone trip until the fog clears.

Driving in the Snow

- Carry chains in snow conditions, even if your vehicle has 4-wheel drive. It is against the law to not have chains with you.
- Carefully observe the speed limit in chain control areas - 25 mph on two-lane roads and 30 mph on multi-lane roads.
- Watch for paddle-shaped markers - they are markers for the edge of the road.
- Between November 1 and April 1, you can use studded tires.
- When installing chains make sure you move your vehicle out of traffic lanes, off roadways and ramps, and park out of the path of snow removal equipment.

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Sources: California Highway Patrol, California Office of Traffic Safety, California State Automobile Association.

The original source for this meeting was [California Office of Transportation Safety](#) .