

FLEETING IDEAS

Adjust to Weather Conditions

Rainy weather and wet roads may cause people to panic and use unsafe driving habits. Taking the proper precautions before and during your drive can make your trip in the rain much safer. Be on alert for accumulated water in low places. Adjust your speed according to weather conditions.

In view of the fact that ½-inch of water will usually cause hydroplaning, slow down to get the traction you need to avoid skidding or hydroplaning. If you try to accelerate on wet pavement, you may cause a loss of steering control and/or fishtailing. Turn off your cruise control to prevent a sudden burst of acceleration from causing a loss of steering control.

Stopping distances increase when it rains. A normal following distance is 3 seconds. You should increase following distance and eye-lead time by an additional second for each hazard, such as, poor visibility, water accumulation, being tailgated, etc. The most helpless feeling is when you need to stop to keep from hitting the car ahead and you feel your tires skidding.

When visibility is poor for you; it is poor for other drivers as well. As per the law in Virginia, when your wipers are on, your lights should be on as well. Use low-beam headlights only.

Sudden stops or lane changes may lead to collisions. Signal your intentions whenever you are going to stop or change lanes. The key word is **SMOOTH**.

Key Points

- Be prepared for rain or other adverse conditions by doing a pre-trip inspection.
- Make sure your wipers, defroster, and headlights work well. Check windshield washer fluid level.
- Slow down to maintain traction, avoid skidding and hydroplaning.
- On wet pavement, you should increase your following distance and eye-lead time.
- Avoid sudden stops or lane changes that could lead to collisions.
- If you are going to stop or change lanes, signal your intentions well in advance and be SMOOTH.
- Turn on your headlights, when you turn on your windshield wipers.
- Turn off Cruise Control to prevent drive tires from spinning.

