

Foul-Weather Driving

Week Number 44 (October 29—November 4) 2017 Edition

Bad weather affects all roads. Our interstate system is a marvelous example of modern engineering, but no matter how good the road is, it is dangerous when there is sleet, snow or ice on it. Speed must be reduced on slippery roads.

When road conditions are slippery, drivers must look farther 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.

Extra care must be taken on hills. Brake over the top of blind hills at a speed that will permit you to bring your vehicle to a stop in case the highway isn't clear ahead. On a downgrade, both loss of traction and gravity are working against you, so proceed slowly.

Don't attempt to drive through a scene where other vehicles have obviously had trouble with the road conditions. The conditions that caused their trouble will affect you, too. When there is no room to get through, be prepared to stop.

The lighting systems of vehicles become especially important during the winter months. Nights are longer, and visibility is often reduced by bad weather. Electrical systems can be winter sensitive. Approximately 80% of all light bulb failure is due to environmental reasons. Drivers must inspect their lights more often during the winter and clean them when necessary, so they can see and be seen on the highway.

Foul weather driving is much more strenuous. Drivers need proper rest before every trip, and while on the road, fresh air helps keep drivers alert. An open window is an old safety practice, and it helps drivers hear what is going on around their vehicles.

Of course, you should never text or look at e-mails while driving, but it is even more important to avoid dis- tractions when conditions are poor.

After all precautions are taken and good practices are followed there will still be occasions when conditions become too hazardous to proceed. Good drivers will pull off the road at the first safe place and wait until conditions improve enough to continue.