

# WET WEATHER DRIVING TIPS

**D**riving in the rain can be more hazardous than driving in the snow, particularly because drivers fail to realize the dangers wet roads can impose. After averaging 10 years of statistics, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that 46 percent of weather-related crashes happened during rainfall, but just 17 percent occurred while it was snowing or sleeting.

Drivers often think rain is no big deal, but while it's not necessary to avoid driving when the raindrops begin to fall, exercising caution when the roads are wet can decrease the risk of being in an auto accident.

- Slow down. Wet roadways cause tires to lose traction, as friction is reduced between the rubber and the asphalt.



Drivers should take extra precautions when driving in foul weather.

It's possible to lose up to one-third of traction in the rain. To compensate, slow down to reduce sliding and stopping distances.

- Improve visibility. Turn on windshield wipers and lights when it is raining. This makes it easier to see the road and makes your vehicle more

visible to other motorists.

- Leave more distance between cars. In addition to improving your reaction time, giving others more space can improve visibility by reducing the amount of mist or splashing caused by other vehicles.
- Stick to daytime

driving. If possible, when it is raining, drive only during the day. Glare from wet roadways and headlights at night can further compromise poor visibility.

- Watch for wind gusts. Anticipate gusts when traveling through windy road corridors or over bridges. — Metro

# Simple projects to keep cars running smoothly

**O**ne of the ways to keep vehicles running strong for years on end is to adhere to the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule. Although there are many factors drivers cannot control, including recalls, weather and road conditions, proper maintenance is something drivers can control, and maintaining a vehicle can be very simple.



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corrosion from leaking battery fluid on the contacts. In such instances, use a battery cleaning brush to clean the contacts and then replace the cables.

### Tire maintenance

Properly inflated, balanced and rotated tires make for a smooth, safe ride. Check that tires are wearing evenly and that the vehicle is not pulling to one side. A lack of tread on tires requires they be replaced. Because tires can be expensive, many drivers put off routine tire maintenance. But this can be a costly mistake. Tires that are worn or not properly inflated can cause skidding, problems braking and accidents. Blowouts also may occur, putting drivers, their passengers and fellow motorists in danger. It's best to be proactive with regard to tire maintenance.

Maintaining a vehicle in adherence to manufacturer guidelines can prolong the life of the car, improve its safety and increase its trade-in or resale value. — Metro

### Oil changes

Motor oil lubricates the engine and keeps it in good working order. Old oil becomes more viscous and can lose its efficacy. While changing motor oil is important, motorists should follow the owner's manual or the factory maintenance schedule regarding how often it needs to be changed, as all vehicles are not alike. The old myth that cars and trucks need oil changes at set intervals has changed as digital check capabilities have evolved.

Car computers can now keep track of more than just mileage. Computers now track starts and stops

**Oil checks and changes are vital to engine health.** and trip durations to determine when cars need oil changes.

### Coolant levels

Coolant helps prevent vehicles from overheating and also prevents the water that it mixes with in the radiator from freezing or boiling. Coolant is nearly as important as motor oil in vehicle maintenance. Coolant is typically comprised of a 50/50 mix of distilled water and antifreeze. These two substances work together to maintain a proper ratio of heat energy and prevent eventual breakdown

and destruction of the engine.

Coolant is usually changed once per year or at 30,000 miles. This keeps the coolant working properly and will help prevent corrosion and deposits from forming inside the cooling system. Coolant levels might be checked during a full-service oil change appointment.

### Check battery contacts

Many modern car batteries do not require a lot of maintenance. However, one problem that may occur is a buildup of minerals or

# Reduce risk of vehicle theft

**A**ccording to the Insurance Information Institute, more than 700,000 motor vehicles were reported stolen in the United States in 2015. Car thieves are often highly skilled, but that does not mean car owners cannot take steps to reduce their risk of being victimized by auto theft.

- Take the simple steps. Suggestions like keeping cars locked at all times and rolling up all windows before walking away from the car may sound simple, but they are also effective. Drivers should avoid being careless no matter how briefly they plan to be away from their vehicles. Talented thieves need only a few seconds to steal a car, so don't make it any easier for them than it already is.

- Park in well-lit areas. Well-lit parking lots may not prevent cars from being stolen, but such lots, especially ones monitored by security cameras, can be a strong deterrent to thieves who want to avoid being seen and having their crimes documented on camera.

- Park in public areas. Avoid parking in areas that are off the beaten path. When parking at

grocery stores, malls or other areas with large parking lots, park as close to pedestrian entrances as possible. Constant foot traffic can deter thieves from attempting to steal cars.

- Install an alarm system and anti-theft device. Insurance companies often discount their premiums for drivers whose vehicles have alarm systems and anti-theft devices. Such systems and technology draw attention to vehicles when thieves attempt to steal them, and many thieves can easily spot which cars have anti-theft devices they would prefer to avoid.

- Remove personal items and valuables from the vehicle. Automobiles should not be used as rolling storage facilities for various reasons. One such reason is that valuables may attract thieves. Women should always take their purses with them when leaving their vehicles, and all drivers should make sure to remove all valuables when exiting their cars.

Car theft is a legitimate concern for drivers, but savvy motorists can take steps to reduce the risk of their vehicles being stolen. — Metro

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