



10 MINUTE
TRAINING
TOPIC

Summer Severe Weather Driving

July 2019

SafetyFirst

Summer Severe Weather Driving

- Intense Rain
- Flooded Roadways
- Lightening
- High Wind
- Hail
- Tornado



Intense Rain

- Turn on your wipers and headlights, but not your emergency lights. Only use the emergency lights if you have an emergency.
- Leave at least six seconds between you and the car in front of you. When the rain gets intense, hydroplaning is a real risk.
- Don't use your cruise control. Hydroplaning problems get worse if you are using cruise control, because the car will speed up and lose control completely.
- If you hydroplane, let go of the gas and steer straight until you get control over the vehicle again.
- Avoid driving through puddles if you can. It's impossible to tell how deep the water in a puddle is or the condition of the road underneath. Driving through puddles can cause damage to your car causing it to stall.
- If the rain is so strong that you can't see, stop. You cannot drive safely if your vision is obscured.



Flooded Roadways

- It only takes six to twelve inches of water for a vehicle to start floating, so do not drive through flowing water.
- Understand that roads under water are prone to collapse.
- If you must drive through a roadway with standing water, slow down to avoid hydroplaning.
- After driving through water, dry your brakes by depressing them slowly to squeeze out any excess water.
- If you get stuck in water, immediately abandon your vehicle and head to higher ground if possible. If you can't get out of the car, get the attention of someone nearby or call 911.
- Purchase a window breaking tool and keep it within reach.
- Flash floods can happen in a severe storm, so stay away from low-lying areas or areas near creeks and other bodies of water.



Lightening

- If you're experiencing lightning and cannot go indoors, stay in your car. During a lightning storm, if the car is hit, the metal exterior will transmit the current to the ground.
- Avoid touching metal in a lightning storm. While your car is a safe place to be, you'll want to avoid touching metal components, including your seat belt buckle, until the storm stops.
- If your car is hit by lightning, wait to exit it until you're certain the current has dissipated. This may mean waiting out the duration of the lightning storm, if possible.
- Understand that the bigger risk from lightning is the risk of it hitting a tree or power line, which are much taller than your car, and sending obstacles into the roadway. Be aware of what is happening around the roadway while you try to drive through the storm.



High Wind

- Anticipate gusts and take special care when driving through areas prone to strong winds or when weather reports predict severe weather.
- Be aware of large vehicles on the road such as tractor-trailers and recreational vehicles. They are more susceptible to high winds and drivers may have difficulty staying in their lane.
- Keep a firm grip on the wheel. Keep both hands on the wheel in case the wind begins to move your vehicle, especially if you are driving a large vehicle or towing a trailer.
- Watch for flying debris. Flying debris can destroy your car or cause a fatal accident. Drive slowly and stay alert.
- Watch for downed power lines. If these are on the road or near water, you are at risk of electrocution, so keep your eyes open for power lines downed by the wind.



Hail

- Immediately turn on the low beams and drop your speed.
- Be aware of the vehicles around you. Other drivers may not know how to react when driving in a hailstorm.
- Allow three times the usual following distance.
- The impact speed of hail is greater on a moving object, so your car is at greater risk of damage when it's traveling forward. If you can, pull into a parking garage, under an overpass, a gas station canopy, or any other spot that offers shelter for your car.
- If pulling onto the shoulder of the road is your only option, make sure the car is completely out of the traffic lanes and off the roadway. Angle the car so the falling hail hits the windshield and not the side or back windows, which can break easier. Windshield glass is reinforced to better withstand wind and the impact of hail.
- Stay inside your vehicle. If possible, lie down with your face away from the window. If you have a coat or blanket in the car, use it to protect your face and head in case of flying glass.



Tornado

If the tornado is far enough away, change course and drive toward a sturdy shelter, such as a store, truck stop, restaurant, etc. to take shelter.

If the tornado threat is immediate or you're stuck in traffic with nowhere to go, take cover in a ditch or a low spot. Get as far away from your car as possible and cover your head. If you're forced to stay in your car, keep your seat belt on and your head lower than your windshield and windows. Cover your head, preferably with a blanket or jacket, to protect yourself from flying glass.

NEVER take shelter under an overpass. Winds are actually higher in these openings and you are just as vulnerable to flying debris there as you are out in the open. Crowding under an overpass can also block traffic and prevent emergency vehicles from getting to affected areas or cut off potential escape routes.



Summer Severe Weather Driving

Precautions to take if you **MUST** drive after severe weather:

Know the road risks. Slippery wet roads, crumbling infrastructure, washouts and more are all possible.

Follow temporary warning signs. Don't assume that because you are a good driver or have a powerful truck or SUV, you will be fine.

Keep your gas tank full. Gas stations may be damaged or closed. Try to find a source of gas, then keep your gas tank at least ½ full at all times.

Know your trip may take longer than normal. If evacuation is necessary, be prepared to face a significant amount of traffic.

Pack food and water. If you are stuck on the road, having food and water in the car is important.

Check your car for damage. If possible, repair any damage before you start driving.

Be aware of other drivers. A scared motorist may drive erratically and fail to follow traffic rules.

Watch out for impaired drivers. Natural disasters cause an increase in substance abuse problems.

Always use your seatbelt. If an unexpected hazard comes your way, your seat belt could save your life.

Know that traffic lights and signs may be gone or damaged. Practice safe driving even without signs, such as treating intersections as a four-way stop if the traffic light is out.

Watch for debris. Trash or debris in the roadway may be hazardous.

Don't drive drowsy. Take the time to rest, even if it just means pulling to the side of the road for a quick nap.

Have paper maps. Your GPS may not work properly or your planned route may be impassable.

Avoid downed power lines. Do not drive over or attempt to move the power line. If an energized line comes into contact with your car, stay in the vehicle.