**Driving in wet conditions Toolbox Talk**

Driving in wet weather puts extra demands on drivers as conditions are more challenging than normal. Your driving style must adapt to the wet road surface and poor visibility by applying caution, reducing speed and using a different method of controlling your vehicle through a much gentler use of the accelerator, brake and steering systems. If the wet road surface causes you to go into a skid, you should take your foot off the accelerator and steer in the direction you want to go in. If your vehicle has an ABS braking system then brake firmly as you ‘steer into the skid’ to regain control of your vehicle.

# Recommendations for driving in wet weather:

* Before setting off check your wiper blades and demister are working correctly. Blades should be replaced at least annually and kept in good condition.
* Check your tyre pressures and tread, this should be done regularly anyway.
* Plan your journey route to avoid roads prone to flooding. Allow extra time for your journey so that delays due to the weather do not put you under time pressure.
* Don’t follow large vehicles closely as their spray will affect your visibility.
* Follow the tracks of the vehicle in front of you and look out for water pooling on road surfaces, especially on outside lanes.
* Reduce your speed and increase your stopping distances to double to allow for wet road surfaces.
* Turn your headlights onto dipped and don’t use your rear fog lights as they will dazzle the driver behind you. Avoid your main beams, as they will reflect back at you off the rain.
* Never drive on a road if the water level is higher than the bottom of your car doors as the water levels will cause serious damage to your vehicle and you could become submerged.
* The glare from lights at night is amplified by rain on the windscreen. Road signs and pedestrians are harder to spot. Be aware of the limits to your visibility and allow a safe breaking distance between your vehicle and those in front.
* Check your shoe soles are dry before driving your vehicle to avoid your foot slipping off the pedals.
* Cruise control slows your ability to control the vehicle so avoid using it in wet weather.

# Aquaplaning/Hydroplaning

Standing water creates a hazard on roads and can cause tyres to loose contact with the road surface due to water accumulating in front of the vehicle’s tyres faster than the weight of the vehicle can push it out of the way. This causes a loss of traction between the tyres and the road surface and so drivers can lose control of their vehicle instantly as the vehicle is travelling on water.

Two key things you must never do if you experience the beginning of aquaplaning:

Do not apply your brakes

Do not turn your steering wheel

Both these actions could cause your vehicle to skid. Instead hold the steering wheel firmly and steer straight ahead taking your foot off the accelerator gradually and only braking lightly with a pumping action instead of constant braking. After this hopefully you will be in control of your vehicle again.

**Remember the essentials**

By following this guidance you should be safer on the roads during wet weather conditions. The key points are to remember to slow down leaving a longer stopping distance between you and the car in front. Monitor the feel of your steering and ease off the accelerator if you feel you have lost contact with the road and are aquaplaning.

# Drivers’ discussion questions

1. Have you ever experienced aquaplaning? What happened?
2. Do you always check you vehicle’s tyres, demister and lights prior to driving in rain?

Comments:

Date:

Meeting conducted by:

# Attendees

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