



NEWS RELEASE

Region 1 Columbia, Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas and Hood River Counties

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Take your time driving in the rain

Tires lose traction when a film of liquid lies between them and the road surface. **Protect yourself!**

*"I'm singing in the rain, just singing in the rain!
What a glorious feeling: I'm happy again!
I'm laughin' the clouds, so dark up above..."*

—Doris Day, "Singing in the Rain"

- ◆ **Take precautionary measures.** Allow for more travel time; keep in mind the traffic and the fact that you should be driving slower. Stay on top of your car's condition: brakes, tire pressure, and tread depth. Wipers and defroster should be checked regularly so that you don't have to deal with them during a deluge. Make sure your wipers are in good condition and functioning properly. If they're brittle or damaged, replace them before you're caught in a downpour.
- ◆ **Slow down.** Drive slowly, particularly through puddles. Hitting several inches of water at high speed can cause you to lose control of the car. Driving fast through puddles may splash water into the engine and stall it. Driving at slower speeds also helps drivers be prepared for sudden stops due to disabled cars, debris and other hazards associated with wet-weather driving. DON'T drive through deep pools!
- ◆ **Keep your distance.** A car needs two to three times more stopping distance on wet pavement, so allow extra following distance between cars. If the car skids and you lose control, do not slam on the brakes. Instead, apply the brakes with a steady, light but firm pressure. Remember to steer in the direction the car is sliding. When you regain traction, your steering control will return. For cars equipped with antilock brakes, apply heavy steady pressure but do not pump the brakes.
- ◆ **Avoid distractions.** Avoid eating, drinking, using your cell phone, tuning the stereo, etc.
- ◆ **Stay informed.** Tune in to radio and television weather reports. Check www.TripCheck.com, where links to cameras on many mountain passes and major routes give real-time views of road conditions.



Car maintenance needs increase during wet weather

- ◆ **Check your brakes.** After driving through a puddle, check that brakes are working properly by tapping them gently a few times.
- ◆ **Use your headlights and the windshield defroster.** Driving in the rain reduces visibility. Turn on your headlights to see and be seen. The defroster can help keep the inside of the windshield clear of moisture.
- ◆ **Check your tires.** Make sure tires are in good condition and are at the recommended inflation level. Driving with bald tires on a slippery surface is a major cause of skidding. Tires should have at least 1/32 of an inch tread depth at any two adjacent grooves, the minimum allowable by law. Driving on tires that are over-inflated or underinflated is also extremely dangerous on wet pavement.
- ◆ **Make sure windshield wiper blades are in good condition.** Streaks or skipping on the vehicle's windshield are signs of worn wiper blades. Inspect wipers once a month and check the washer solvent reservoir to ensure it's full.

Hydroplaning

This happens when your front tires actually “surf” on a film of water. Hydroplaning depends on the condition of your tires and can occur at speeds as low as 35 miles per hour, especially if tires are worn. New tires with lots of tread that can “pump” out water may resist hydroplaning, but any tire will hydroplane if you are driving fast enough. If you start hydroplaning, take your foot off the gas, apply brakes gently and try to steer straight ahead.

For More Information

Oregon's weather can change quickly and without warning. In Oregon, call 511 or visit www.TripCheck.com for road conditions; the site also provides links to bus, train, and airport information.



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