

## Transportation Safety Newsletter, December 2020

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Oregon Department  
of Transportation

## Transportation Safety

December 2020

### Driving in the Rain



Our dark and rainy season has arrived. For some people, driving in the rain, especially in the dark, is anxiety producing. Rain can limit visibility of hazards on the road and increase your stopping distance. But being behind the wheel and a rain-covered windshield doesn't have to be a nerve-racking experience. Our partners at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office offer some tips for driving in a downpour:

1. **Focus.** We are all guilty of driving out of habit. So as a reminder, when it rains, we often need to adjust our thinking. When conditions are less than ideal, stay alert and focused on what's going on around you.

2. **Turn on your headlights.** It's the law in every state to turn on headlights when visibility is low. Well-working wipers and relatively new (not threadbare) tires are also must-haves when driving in rain.
3. **Beware of hydroplaning.** That's what occurs when your tires are getting more traction on the layer of water on the road than on the road itself—the result is that your car begins to slide uncontrollably. It's easy enough to hydroplane: All you need is one-twelfth of an inch of rain on the road and a speed of more than 35 miles per hour. If you start to hydroplane, let off the accelerator slowly and steer straight until you regain control.
4. **Turn off cruise control.** Ironically, on rain- or snow-slick surfaces, cruise control may cause you to lose control. You might think it'll help you stay at one steady speed, but if you hydroplane while you're in cruise control, your car will actually go faster.
5. **Slow down.** Speed limits are designed for ideal conditions – that means driving when you have little traffic and good visibility. That's hardly the environment you're driving in when it's raining, so let up on the accelerator and allow more time to get to your destination.

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## Drive Safely This Holiday Season

The holiday season is known for being merry and bright. Unfortunately, instances of drunk driving increase during the holidays as more people attend parties and festivities and then drive home.

One person was killed in a drunk-driving crash every 50 minutes in the U.S. during 2018.

Plan ahead to designate a sober driver before you ever head out to the holiday festivities. Wishing you and your family a safe and healthy holiday season!



## Aging Driver Awareness

With age comes wisdom. But the older we get, the more conditions arise that may affect our ability to drive safely. Whether it's you, a loved one, or someone in your care, it's important to keep track of changes, including vision, medications, physical limitations, and reaction time.

Everyone is different, but there are some signs to look for and guidelines to keep. Having these discussions and making these decisions can be difficult, but they also keep people – including the people we care about most – safe.

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## Are You Winter Ready?

In Oregon, we know life doesn't stop just because it's raining or snowing, but there are things we can do to keep ourselves and others safe when we're out and about. Visit our [Winter Driving Tips](#) website for more information and the "[Winter Driving Guide](#)." Check road conditions on your route before you go at [TripCheck.com](#) so you arrive safely at your destination!

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## Why You Need Winter Tires

What exactly is the difference between summer tires, all-season tires, and winter tires? The type of tire you choose depends on where you live and how often you experience low temperatures and snowy conditions. All-season tires offer good traction in most conditions, but in below 40-degree temperatures winter tires offer better traction.

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## Sign Up for Driver Ed

Give your teen a reason to celebrate – no drive test at the DMV! And ODOT-approved driver ed is the best way to make teens better and safer drivers. Stress less. Save more. And let the pros handle it.

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## Resources

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