

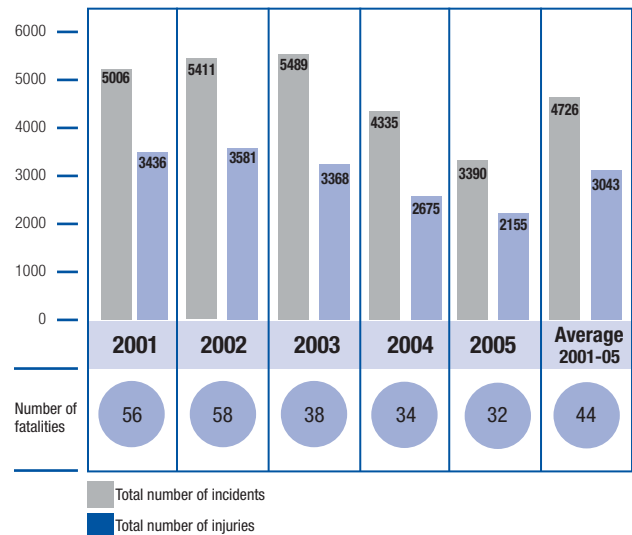
# Bad Weather Driving Tips

## Trends

### 2005 weather-related crash incidents in B.C.

- Weather was cited as a contributing factor in:
  - 6.7 per cent of all crash incidents, down from 8.8 per cent in 2004.
  - 7.3 per cent of all injury crash incidents, down from 9.3 per cent in 2004.
  - 7.4 per cent of all fatal crash incidents, down from 8.1 per cent in 2004.
- In weather-related crash incidents, the most often cited high-risk driver behaviour was speed.
- Drivers aged 36 to 45 were most often in a crash incident involving weather as a contributing factor. Drivers aged 26 to 35 were most often in a fatal crash incident involving weather as a contributing factor.
- Male drivers were most often in a crash incident involving weather as a contributing factor. Male drivers were most often in a fatal crash incident involving weather as a contributing factor.

### Weather-related incidents, injuries and fatalities (2001 – 2005)



2005 fatality count is not fixed. Fatality data continues to settle over time.

## Bad weather driving tips for travellers

In poor weather, the best decision may be to stay off the road and avoid driving, or take a bus or transit until conditions improve. Check [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com) Traveller's

### Travellers' Tips

road conditions, maps, traffic, highways, traffic webcams, ferries and weather.

[www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com)

Tips or your local TV or radio for current road and weather conditions. If you do proceed leave early and allow extra time to get to your destination. Tell someone which route you are taking and when you plan to arrive. Try to stick to the roads which have been plowed and salted.

**Remember that posted speed limits are for ideal weather conditions and maximum visibility.** Slow down and leave plenty of extra space between you and the vehicle in front of you. It can take twice the usual distance to stop your vehicle on even slightly wet roads.

**Do not use cruise control in wet or slippery conditions.** Your owner's manual will tell you to use it only in ideal

weather conditions. Snow, ice, slush and rain can cause wheel-spin and loss of control. The only way to stop this wheel-spin and maintain control is to immediately reduce power. However, an activated cruise control system will continue to apply power, keeping the wheels spinning. By the time you turn off the cruise control it may be too late for you to regain control.

**See and be seen.** Clear all frost and snow from the windows, mirrors, headlights, rear lights, hood and roof of your vehicle. Not only will you be able to see better but snow and ice could be dangerous to others if it falls from your moving vehicle.

A problem that might be a relatively minor inconvenience in the summer could be disastrous if it left you and your passengers stranded in the winter. Avoid breakdowns by having your vehicle properly maintained and equipped. See the checklist at the end of this fact sheet.

## Driving Tips

### Rain

Roads are slickest when it first starts to rain. Water mixes with motor oil, grease and dirt on the pavement making roads especially slippery and hazardous.

- Reduce your speed.
- Turn on headlights.
- Turn on windshield wipers.
- On multi-lane roads, stay in the middle lanes. Water tends to pool in the outside lanes as the roadway drains toward the curb or ditch.
- Drive around, not through, standing water or flooded areas.
- Avoid swerving and abrupt braking; smooth steering and braking helps you maintain control of your vehicle.
- Check your mirrors more frequently and set them to minimize blind spots. Rain on your outside mirrors and rear window can distort your view or make things harder to see.



### Hydroplaning

Hydroplaning occurs when a vehicle passes through water that is deeper than the tread of the tires. This creates a film of water that causes the tire to lose contact with the road surface as it skims along the top of the water, or hydroplanes.

- Best way to avoid hydroplaning is to reduce your speed in wet conditions.
- Good tire tread pushes water out from under the tires to the sides and provides better traction. Bald or under-inflated tires are dangerous.

- **Do not use cruise control** when driving in wet conditions. Cruise control while hydroplaning is especially dangerous because the vehicle will try to maintain the speed of the drive-train while there is limited contact with the road.
- **If you do find yourself hydroplaning** – Ease off the accelerator; keep steering in a straight direction, don't brake. Never turn the steering wheel or apply the brakes as this could cause the vehicle to skid out of control. If braking is unavoidable, pump the brakes gently until hydroplaning has stopped. **If you have anti-lock brakes don't pump them**, but apply constant, firm pressure to the pedal.

### Fog

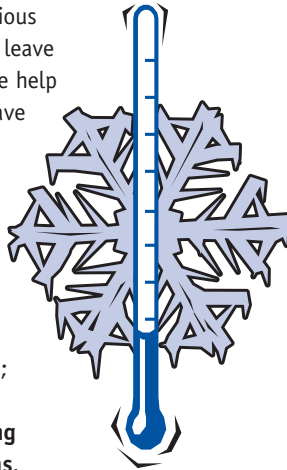
Take all fog-related warning signs seriously. Fog makes it difficult to judge speed. Check your speedometer to make sure you have slowed down. If you get caught in heavy fog, the best thing to do is pull over and stop well off the road. Try to position your vehicle in a protected area away from other traffic until visibility improves. Turn on your emergency flashers, or hazard lights.

#### If there is no safe place to stop:

- Slow down; keep your distance from the vehicle in front. Don't tailgate the vehicle in front to help guide you; this gives you a false sense of security, is annoying to the other driver and unsafe for everyone.
- Turn on the low-beam headlights; don't use high-beams in fog as they can actually reduce your visibility.
- Use fog lights if visibility is seriously reduced, but remember to switch them off when visibility improves.
- Steer and brake smoothly; moisture from fog can make roads slick.
- Turn on wipers and defroster.
- Open your window a crack and turn off the radio so you can watch and listen for slower moving or parked vehicles.

## Snow and ice

Driving in snow and ice is a serious matter and winter storms could leave drivers stranded for hours before help arrives. Being prepared could save your life. If possible, wait until the roads have been plowed and sanded before heading out. If you must drive in bad weather, completely clear snow and ice from your vehicle before moving. Don't use wipers on an icy windshield; ice can cut the blades. **Do not use cruise control when driving in wet, snowy or icy conditions.**



- To help maintain traction as you're getting underway:

**Automatic transmission** - put your vehicle in "D2" (second gear) and accelerate gently. Shift to "D" (Drive), once you're moving.

**Standard transmission** - use the highest gear which lets you move the vehicle without stalling - such as second or third gear. Accelerate gently. Shift to a lower gear once you're moving.

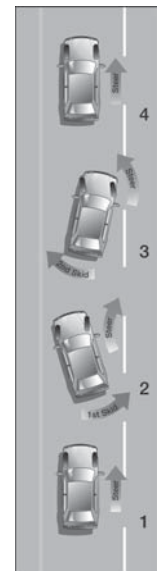
- Keep your speed steady and slow; but not too slow. In deeper snow, you may need to use the vehicle's momentum to keep moving.
- Use brakes cautiously. Abrupt braking can cause brake lock-up, which causes you to lose steering control.
- **Anti-lock brakes** are designed to overcome a loss of steering control. To make anti-lock brakes work correctly, or work at all, you should apply constant, firm pressure to the pedal. During an emergency stop, push the brake pedal all the way to the floor, even in wet or icy conditions.

- **If you get stuck in snow** - straighten the wheels and clear an area around the tires and use sand or kitty litter under the drive wheels to improve traction. Accelerate slowly; avoid spinning the tires.
- **Bridges and overpasses** - freeze first and remain frozen longer than other pavement on the road, so use extra caution.
- **Railway crossings** - be especially careful when approaching railway crossings and give yourself extra time to stop as roads and rails may be icy.
- **Be aware of black ice**, which occurs more often in shaded areas and is difficult to see.

## How to handle a skid:

Skids can happen any time the tires lose grip with the road. Although rain and ice contribute to skidding, poor driving skills are the main cause. Here's a scenario on how to control a skid:

1. You're driving straight and encounter a patch of black ice and the rear of your vehicle skids to the right.
2. **Ease off the accelerator** and look and steer smoothly in the direction you want to go (in this case, steer to the right). **Don't brake** - this will make the situation worse.
3. Now the rear of your vehicle skids to the left. Overcorrecting in the initial skid likely caused this. Stay off the accelerator and steer smoothly in the direction you want to go. You may need to repeat steps 2 and 3 until you regain control.
4. Once you've regained control, continue driving with caution.



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[www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com)

## SAFETY CHECKLIST – Being prepared could save your life

Refer to your vehicle owner's manual for more complete information.

### Vehicle maintenance

- Motor is tuned-up
- Brakes all work effectively
- Battery is in good condition, cables are cleaned and tightened (battery has to work much harder in colder weather to power lights, heater, wipers, etc.)
- Belts and hoses are all in good condition
- Antifreeze is full and correct mixture for cold weather.

### Tires

Visit the road safety section of [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com).

- All have good tread and are inflated correctly, including the spare.  
Traction is compromised when driving on ice/snow the correct tire pressure is critical. Tire pressure drops in cold weather and will require topping up.
- Are appropriate for the season and road conditions
  - summer tires – not recommended for snowy or icy conditions
  - all-season tires – a compromise for all conditions, they're adequate, at best, in wet, dry or snowy conditions
  - snow tires – provide better traction, braking, stability and control in snow and slush.

### Fuel

- Top up the fuel tank. The extra volume can help reduce moisture problems in your fuel system, adds extra weight to your vehicle, and can be an asset if you become stranded.

### Windshield & Windows

- Wiper blades are in good condition; wipers move freely, not stuck to windshield
- Washer reservoir is full and fluid is rated for appropriate temperature
- Washer jets squirt properly
- All windows and mirrors provide good visibility, clear of mist, mud, frost, snow.

### Lights & Fuses

- All lights work properly: headlights, brake lights, signals, back-up lights, hazards
- All fuses work properly.

### Exhaust System

- Muffler and exhaust pipes are in good condition corrosion or holes in the exhaust can leak deadly carbon monoxide fumes into the passenger compartment.
- Exhaust tailpipe isn't obstructed by snow or mud (never back into snow banks).

### Items you should always have in your vehicle during winter

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scraper and brush  | <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets, sleeping bag                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First-aid kit, fully stocked   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tire chains                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shovel   | <input type="checkbox"/> Booster cables                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra fuses  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tow rope                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candles and matches  | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight with working batteries              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking water   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hi-energy food (nuts, protein bars, chocolate) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra clothing, gloves, boots (in case you need to walk out)   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sand bags, traction mats, or old carpets (kitty litter can also be used for traction)                |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone, to use in case of emergency; but remember some remote areas may not have cell reception. |   |