



Good drivers know the special hazards of winter driving, but should be reminded about the danger of skidding when speed is too high.

One of the most terrifying experiences in winter driving is the skid. If it happens at high speed, the result could be a disastrous crash. It is urgent to slow down at the first hint that the road is slick. Most skids could be avoided by adjusting to the conditions, and it is possible to recover from skids if you know how.

The experienced driver knows that skids are likely on curves and turns, so slow down ahead of time, then apply power slightly into the curve. Steering is steady, with no abrupt change in direction and, especially, no abrupt braking.

Plan ahead of time for lane changes; check your rearview mirrors, check your blind spots and signal your intentions to traffic behind and swing over in a long, gradual tangent. Make the move with the smallest possible steering change and with a light foot on the gas.

If you go into a skid, remember two cardinal rules—don't steer against the skid and don't hit the brakes. Instead, steer in the direction the vehicle is sliding until you feel recovery of traction, then slowly straighten the wheels and keep rolling.

If braking is necessary before rolling traction is recovered, apply the break peddle carefully so as not to lock the wheels and intensify the skid. You have better control in a skid situation if your vehicle is equipped with anti-lock breaks.

The expert driver is constantly on the lookout for areas that might induce skidding, such as unexpected ice patches or piles of wet leaves, to be found especially in shady areas or on overpasses. Keep in mind that wet ice, warmed by the sun, is twice as treacherous as "cold" ice.

Above all, the expert driver knows that a safe stop on icy or snow-packed roads is a tricky maneuver which requires skill and good judgment. First of all, anticipate stops. Slow down gradually, well ahead of intersections, conscious of the fact that approaches to stopping places are apt to be polished and slick, because of stopping and starting traffic.

Since accidents are so common in winter, the expert driver makes a double allowance for the sake of safety. First, drive on slippery roads at reduced speed; and second, increase following distance behind the vehicle ahead. This gives an extra space cushion for safe stopping, in case there is trouble ahead.

Tricky traction, as every driver knows, makes a difference between winter and summer driving. So every driver should learn how to get the best possible traction when the going is slippery.

When you drive into deep snow, you may find that stepping on the gas only provides a spinning of the wheels, with little if any forward movement. In such cases, one should avoid over-powering. A light foot on the gas pedal and a high gear is preferable.

If you get stuck in the deep snow, you may only spin your wheels in trying to get out. Sometimes it helps to twist the steering wheel back and forth to push away snow in front, then try again—lightly. A sprinkling of sand or light gravel in front of drive wheels may be necessary.

Easy rocking, back and forward, may help regain traction, but first know whether such shifting from forward to reverse and back again might damage your particular transmission. Even a shoveling out of snow may be necessary when you're stuck.

Braking distance, depends directly on the kind of contact the vehicle tires make with the slippery surface of the road. Your tires should have good tread surfaces. There will be times that snow tires, and even chains, may be best to help keep your vehicle under control during blustery winter storms.

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