



St. Johns County Sheriff's Office

"Taking Care of People"

Driving in the Rain Safety Tips

Remember that severe weather demands your undivided attention, so be sure to reduce any possible distractions by turning the radio down or turning off that phone to keep your attention fully on the road. Keep in mind that sometimes the best driving decision you can make is to stay off the road completely until the weather clears.

In addition to the potentially poor visibility that accompanies most heavy rain, drivers should be ready to protect themselves against hydroplaning. Hydroplaning can occur when a vehicle is traveling too fast in heavy rain conditions, causing the vehicle's tires to travel on a thin layer of water rather than grip the surface of the road. This has the potential to make steering and braking difficult and could even lead to losing control of your vehicle. Follow these tips to help you stay safe while driving in heavy rain.

1. **Take your time.** Slowing down is the only way to keep your vehicle from hydroplaning. Also remember that one of the most dangerous times to drive is soon after it begins to rain, as oils on roadway make for slick conditions. Waiting a few minutes, rather than rushing to your destination, can be a safer plan when it is raining.
2. **Don't use cruise control.** Avoiding cruise control will allow the driver more options to choose from when responding to a potential loss-of-traction situation, thus maximizing your safety.
3. **Turn your lights on.** Turn your headlights if your wipers are on. This will help other vehicles see you. DO NOT use your bright lights.
4. **Give other vehicles more space.** Add 1-2 extra seconds of following time in the rain, which gives you and the cars behind you more time to react to traffic.
5. **Don't use your hazard lights.** Your hazard lights are used to alert drivers of stalled vehicles, not vehicles that are driving slowly. If you feel like you need to turn your hazard lights to drive because you don't feel safe, we suggest pulling off the road and waiting until the storm passes.
6. **Don't drive on flooded roads.** If water is covering the markings on the road, it's too deep to drive on. You can lose control with as little as three inches of water on the road. And even if you manage to stay in control, a larger vehicle could push some of that water underneath your car, causing your engine to stall.
7. **Don't drive with your hazard (flashers) on.** Hazard lights are meant for when your car has broken down or stopped on the side of the road. It's a sign for first responders that you need help. According to the Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, it's illegal. Operating a vehicle with hazard lights can become a hazard to other drivers who may believe you are stopped or stalled on the road. It may make it difficult for other driver's to recognize whether the motorist is tapping on their brakes or using a turn signal.