

## WHEN DRIVING ON SNOW OR ICE REMEMBER THE THREE S's

Low **S**PEED

**S**AFE Distance from other road users

Drive **S**MOOTHLY



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### Prevent Your Car Skidding How To Cope with A Skid

Skidding is more likely to occur when there is ice, snow or water on the road. However it is important to remember that most skidding is a result of bad driving. A car will only skid if it is being driven at an inappropriate speed or if provoked to do so by aggressive steering, braking or acceleration.

To prevent skidding you should never ask your car to do more than it can do with the grip available. As a result, in poor weather conditions you should:

- Slow down
- Increase your stopping distance, so if the vehicle in front stops unexpectedly you have enough space to brake to a stop without skidding.
- Take extra care when approaching a bend.
- Be gentle and progressive when steering, accelerating and braking.

Your car is more likely to skid when the road is icy or covered in snow. In such conditions to avoid skidding you should slow right down. You should also steer and brake very gently. Your stopping distance should also be increased by up to ten times greater than in normal conditions.

When driving in winter, and especially on a winters evening when the sky is clear you should look out for ice forming on the road. For early warning signs look to see if ice is forming on the windows of parked cars.

You should be extra careful when travelling on an exposed road such as a motorway bridge. Ice will often form here first. If your car has an outside temperature meter then keep a close eye on it.

In freezing conditions beware of rain. This can form black ice, which lies invisible on the road. Black ice isn't actually black it is transparent. Hence it's notoriety as a driver hazard.

In icy conditions your steering may start to feel lighter. Tyre noise may also decrease. If this happens then you are likely to be driving on ice. To prevent a dangerous skid lift your foot gently off the accelerator. This will allow your car to slow smoothly and gently. If you need to continue driving then do so slowly using a high gear. This will help you avoid hard acceleration, which could spin the wheels.

Accelerating too hard can also cause skidding. If you accelerate too hard when moving off on a slippery road then the driven wheels will spin without propelling the car forward. In icy conditions some wheel spin may be inevitable. To minimize the spin try engaging a higher gear.

Braking hard on a slippery road can also cause your car to skid. Your wheels can lock up and you will continue onwards with little or no braking effect. The locked wheels will also prevent you from steering. If this happens you should release the brake pedal to free the wheels then reapply the brake less harshly. If your car has ABS fitted then your wheels won't lock. However don't think ABS eases all problems when driving on a slippery road. It doesn't.

On a slippery road if you approach a corner too quickly there is a good possibility that your car will skid. This is even more likely if you also brake harshly whilst taking the corner. You turn the steering wheel to corner but there is no response and the car continues on ahead. This is a classic front wheel skid. If this happens then remove your foot from the accelerator. This throws the weight balance of the car forwards and helps the tyres find grip. Do not use the brake. As the tyres find grip carefully steer the car into the direction of the skid. For example if the rear of the car skids to the left, steer quickly and smoothly to the left.