How to adjust your driving for rain, snow, ice, fog, wind, and extreme temperatures

WHY THIS MATTERS

Nearly 22% of all vehicle crashes are weather-related — approximately 1.2 million per year. For commercial vehicles, the stakes are higher: longer stopping distances, greater rollover risk, and cargo considerations multiply every hazard.

1 Rain & Wet Roads

Reduce 30-50%	Double (2x)	Up to 2x Longer	Starts at 35 mph
SPEED REDUCTION	FOLLOWING DISTANCE	STOPPING DISTANCE	HYDROPLANE RISK

- Reduce speed: Wet pavement can double stopping distance. Slow down 30-50% below the posted limit in heavy rain.
- Avoid standing water: Hydroplaning begins at 35 mph on as little as 1/12 inch of water. Steer around puddles when safe.
- Increase following distance: Double your normal following distance to allow for extended braking on wet surfaces.
- Use low beams: High beams reflect off rain and reduce visibility. Use low beams and ensure wipers are in good condition.
- Beware the first 15 minutes: Oil and debris float to the surface when rain first starts, making roads especially slippery.
- Brake before curves and turns: Wet roads reduce tire grip dramatically. Slow down before entering, not during, curves.

CRITICAL: If you hydroplane, do NOT brake or turn sharply. Ease off the accelerator, keep the wheel steady, and let the tires regain contact.

2 Snow & Ice

Reduce 50%+	Triple (3x)	Up to 10x on Ice	Below 40°F
SPEED REDUCTION	FOLLOWING DISTANCE	STOPPING DISTANCE	BRIDGE FREEZE TEMP

- Reduce speed by at least 50%: On packed snow, stopping distance triples. On ice, it can increase by 10 times.
- Triple following distance: Allow at least 3x your normal following distance. On ice, consider 5x or more.
- Bridges and overpasses freeze first: Reduce speed before reaching elevated surfaces — they ice over while roads are still clear.
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly: Gentle throttle application prevents wheel spin. Gradual braking prevents lockup and skids.
- Avoid cruise control: Cruise control can cause wheel spin on slick surfaces. Maintain manual control of speed at all times.
- Clear all snow and ice from the vehicle: Snow blowing off your trailer is a hazard to other drivers and can result in citations.
- Test traction periodically: In a safe area at low speed, gently brake to gauge road surface conditions.

CRITICAL: Black ice is nearly invisible. If the road looks wet but you don't hear tire spray, assume it's black ice. Reduce speed immediately.

3 Fog & Low Visibility

Match Visibility	Triple (3x)	Never — Use Low	Pull Over < 200 ft
SPEED REDUCTION	FOLLOWING DISTANCE	USE HIGH BEAMS?	VISIBILITY THRESHOLD

- Use low beams only: High beams reflect off fog and create a "white wall" effect that worsens visibility.
- Reduce speed to match visibility: You must be able to stop within the distance you can see ahead.
- Use fog lights if equipped: Fog lights are mounted low and angled down, cutting under the fog layer.
- Increase following distance to at least 3x: Vehicles ahead may stop suddenly. You need time to react to what you can't see.
- Use the right-side road edge line as a guide: Avoid drifting toward oncoming traffic by following the white edge line.
- Turn off cruise control: You need full manual control to respond to rapidly changing visibility.
- Listen for traffic: Roll down your window at intersections. You may hear what you can't see.

CRITICAL: If visibility drops below 200 feet, pull off the road completely to a safe location. Turn off driving lights and use hazards only.

4 High Winds & Crosswinds

Reduce 25-50%	High — Empty Trailers	45+ mph Dangerous	Open Areas, Bridges
SPEED REDUCTION	ROLLOVER RISK	WIND GUST THRESHOLD	WORST EXPOSURE

- Reduce speed: Lower speeds give you more control. A 60 mph crosswind gust on a box trailer can flip it in seconds.
- Grip the steering wheel firmly with both hands: Wind gusts are sudden and can push the vehicle into adjacent lanes.
- Beware of empty or lightly loaded trailers: They act like sails. An empty trailer is far more vulnerable to wind than a loaded one.
- Watch for high-profile vehicles and debris: Other trucks, RVs, and airborne debris are all hazards in high wind.
- Be cautious exiting tunnels, passing through gaps, and crossing bridges: Wind hits hardest in open or transitional areas.
- Monitor weather reports continuously: If sustained winds exceed 45 mph, consider parking until conditions improve.

CRITICAL: If your trailer starts to sway, do NOT brake hard. Ease off the accelerator and steer gently into the wind until you regain stability.

5 Extreme Heat

Highest Above 100°F	Starts at 400°F+	Up to 150°F	1 Cup Every 20 Min
TIRE BLOWOUT RISK	BRAKE FADE	PAVEMENT TEMP	HYDRATION NEED

- Monitor tire pressure and condition: Heat increases tire pressure and accelerates tread wear. Check tires at every stop.
- Watch for brake fade on long descents: Use engine braking and lower gears. Overheated brakes lose stopping power rapidly.
- Stay hydrated: Drink water consistently — at least one cup every 20 minutes. Dehydration impairs reaction time and judgment.
- Watch for pavement heaving and soft shoulders: Extreme heat causes pavement to buckle and shoulders to soften.
- Monitor engine temperature: Overheating is the leading cause of roadside breakdowns in summer. Watch gauges constantly.
- Take more frequent breaks: Heat accelerates fatigue. Stop every 2 hours minimum and cool down.

CRITICAL: Heat stroke is a medical emergency. If you experience confusion, dizziness, or stop sweating in hot conditions, pull over immediately and call 911.

6 Thunderstorms & Hail

Reduce 50%+	Stay in Vehicle	Pull Over & Cover	6 Inches Moves a Car
SPEED REDUCTION	LIGHTNING RISK	HAIL RESPONSE	FLASH FLOOD DEPTH

- Pull over in severe conditions: If hail, lightning, or torrential rain makes driving unsafe, stop under an overpass or in a safe lot.
- Never drive through flooded roads: Six inches of moving water can sweep a car; twelve inches can carry a truck. Turn around.
- Stay in your vehicle during lightning: Your truck's metal frame acts as a Faraday cage. Do not exit or touch metal surfaces.
- Turn on hazard lights when stopped: Make sure other drivers can see you if you've pulled over in heavy rain or hail.
- Watch for sudden downbursts: Severe thunderstorms can produce wind gusts over 60 mph with no warning. Stay alert to sky changes.
- After the storm, watch for debris: Fallen branches, standing water, downed power lines, and damaged signs are common post-storm hazards.

CRITICAL: Never attempt to cross a flooded roadway — "Turn Around, Don't Drown." Water depth is impossible to judge and roads may be washed out underneath.

UNIVERSAL RULE: WHEN IN DOUBT, SLOW DOWN OR PULL OVER

No load, schedule, or deadline is worth your life. If conditions feel unsafe, trust your instincts. Pull to a safe location, activate hazards, and contact dispatch. A delayed delivery is always better than a preventable crash.

Driver Acknowledgment

I have reviewed this Weather Driving Reference and understand how to adjust my driving for adverse conditions. I will reduce speed, increase following distance, and pull over when conditions are unsafe.

Driver Signature _____ Printed Name _____ Date _____