

DECEMBER GROUND SAFETY

[This month's read file contains tips for driving in rain and winter fire safety.](#)

Tips for Driving In Rain

Rainy driving tips - Smart Motorist offers the following suggestions for safer driving in wet weather. In stormy conditions, it is more difficult to see other vehicles, road signs and the road itself. It is critical to make sure you can see and be seen.

- First and foremost: slow down! It takes longer to stop or adjust in wet weather.
- Stay toward the middle lanes - water tends to pool in the outside lanes.
- Maintain proper following distance (**3 Second Rule**). This needs to be increased in wet weather.
- Drive in the tracks of a car ahead of you.
- Don't follow large trucks or busses too closely. The spray created by their large tires reduces your vision. Take care when passing them as well; if you must pass, do so quickly and safely.
- Be more alert when driving in wet or slippery conditions. Watch out for brake lights in front of you.
- Avoid using your brakes; if possible, take your foot off the accelerator to slow down.
- Turn your headlights on even in a light rain, or in gloomy, foggy or overcast conditions. Not only do they help you see the road, but they'll help other drivers see you. If your car has daytime running lights you still should put them on, so vehicles behind you can see you better.
- Before it starts to rain, replace old or brittle wipers.
- Avoid off-road driving: it's hard to judge the actual depth of puddles and you can easily become stuck, even in an SUV.
- Never drive beyond the limits of visibility. At night rainy roads become especially treacherous. The glare of oncoming lights, amplified by the rain on your windshield, can cause temporary loss of visibility while substantially increasing driver fatigue. In rainy conditions pedestrians, livestock, and wildlife are extremely hard to spot and even harder to avoid.
- Never drive through moving water if you can't see the ground through it; your car could be swept off the road.
- When driving through a puddle of uncertain depth, go slow. If it's deeper than the bottom of your doors, turn around and find another route. Deep water can cause serious damage to a modern car's electrical system.
- Avoid splashing pedestrians.
- If possible, stay off the road during heavy thunderstorms. Large flashes of lightning can temporarily blind and disorient drivers, and the accompanying high winds and heavy rain can create deadly driving conditions.

EXCESSIVE SPEED IS NOT IMPRESSIVE



This was a late model BMW.

Winter Fires



Safety Tips for the Home

The high cost of home heating fuels and utilities have caused many Americans to search for alternative sources of home heating. The use of wood burning stoves is growing and space heaters are selling rapidly, or coming out of storage. Fireplaces are burning wood and man-made logs.

All of these methods may be acceptable. They are, however, a major contributing factor in residential fires. Many of these fires can be prevented. The following safety tips can help you maintain a fire safe home this winter.

Wood Stoves and Fireplaces

Wood stoves and fireplaces are becoming a very common heat source in homes. Careful attention to safety can minimize their fire hazard.

To use them safely:

- Be sure the stove or fireplace is installed properly. Woodstoves should have adequate clearance (36") from combustible surfaces, and proper floor support and protection.

- Woodstoves should be of good quality, solid construction and design, and should be UL listed.
- Have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned if necessary, especially if it has not been used for some time.
- Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening, to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out, unwanted material from going in, and help prevent the possibility of burns to occupants.
- The stove should be burned hot twice a day for 15-30 minutes to reduce the amount of creosote buildup.
- Don't use excessive amounts of paper to build roaring fires in fireplaces. It is possible to ignite creosote in the chimney by overbuilding the fire.
- Never burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.
- Keep flammable materials away from your mantel. A spark from the fireplace could easily ignite these materials.
- Before you go to sleep, be sure your fireplace fire is out. NEVER close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace. A closed damper will help the fire to heat up again and will force toxic carbon monoxide into the house. If synthetic logs are used, follow the directions on the package. Never break a synthetic log apart to quicken the fire or use more than one log at a time. They often burn unevenly, releasing higher levels of carbon monoxide.

Furnace Heating

It is important that you have your furnace inspected to insure that it is in good working condition.

- Be sure all furnace controls and emergency shutoffs are in proper working condition. Leave furnace repairs to qualified specialists. Do not attempt repairs yourself unless you are qualified.
- Inspect the walls and ceiling near the furnace and along the chimney line. If the wall is hot or discolored, additional pipe insulation or clearance may be required.
- Check the flue pipes and pipe seams. Are they well supported? Free of holes, and cracks? Soot along or around seams may indicate a leak.
- Is the chimney solid? Any cracks or loose bricks? All unused flue openings should be sealed with solid masonry.
- Keep trash and other combustibles away from the heating system.

Other Fire Safety Tips

- Never discard hot ashes inside or near the home. Place them in a metal container outside and well away from the home.
- Never use a range or an oven as a supplementary heating device. Not only is it a safety hazard, it can be a source of potentially toxic fumes.

- If you use an electric heater, be sure not to overload the circuit. Use only extension cords which have the necessary rating to carry the amp load.
- Avoid using electric space heaters in bathrooms, or other areas where they may come in contact with water.
- Frozen water pipes? Never try to thaw them with a blow torch or other open flame (the pipe could conduct the heat and ignite the wall structure inside the wall space). Use hot water or a UL labeled device such as a hand held dryer for thawing.
- If windows are used as emergency exits in your home, practice using them in the event fire should strike. Be sure that all windows open easily; home escape ladders are recommended.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home you can assist the fire department by keeping the fire hydrant clear of tall grass.

Finally... Be sure every level of your home has a working smoke detector, and be sure to check and clean it on a monthly basis. Change the batteries regularly: for example, twice a year, when changing your clock for Daylight Savings Time.

Supervisors brief your shops and document briefing on a Form 703.

V/R,

CAP-USAF Safety Dude