

## Driving in Wet Weather



Driving in heavy rain and flooding can be hazardous. Here are some useful hints and tips to help you prepare for wet weather.

Breakdown numbers always increase during periods of wet weather, as the damp cause's problems with engines and electrical systems, particularly in older vehicles. If you must drive, there are a handful of steps you can take to reduce your chances of an accident or breakdown dramatically.

Many rain-related breakdowns are easily avoidable as they are often caused by people driving through deep standing water. While cars have improved significantly in technical terms in recent years they are still not waterproof and will break down if they are driven through deep water. This can lead to catastrophic engine failure which will be extremely expensive to put right.

A catastrophic flood-related engine damage incident is typically caused by water being sucked into the engine which causes the engine to lock up and can in turn damage important engine components including piston connecting rods and valves.

This inevitably means a new engine will have to be fitted, but what people generally don't understand is that it is the owner who is likely to have foot the expensive garage bill unless they can demonstrate to their insurer - like any accident - that it was not their actions that caused the damage.

### Before setting off checklist:

- Consider whether your journey is essential. If not, can it be delayed until after the rain has subsided?
- Let relatives and friends know your intended route and expected time of arrival and where possible, travel with others
- Check that your windscreen wiper blades are fully functional. If both front and back blades are not up to scratch, get them replaced
- Make sure you fill up. Using your lights and heaters and being caught in traffic use more fuel than driving in normal conditions
- Carry a mobile phone in case you encounter any difficulties during your journey.

### The following tips should always be followed for driving in flooded conditions:

- Do not attempt to drive through water if you are unsure of the depth - the edge of the kerb is a good indicator
- If you do go through water, drive on the highest section of the road
- Drive steadily and slowly so as not to create a bow wave in front of the vehicle and allow oncoming traffic to pass first - make sure you have a clear route ahead so you do not have to stop in standing water
- Driving at speed may be dangerous to other vehicles or pedestrians and could cause loss of control
- Drive a safe distance from the vehicle in front
- Never attempt to drive through fast flowing water - you could easily get swept away
- Test your brakes after leaving flood water
- If your engine cuts out after driving through deep water, DO NOT attempt to restart as engine damage may occur - instead call for assistance and have the vehicle professionally examined.