Preventing Hydroplaning

Use this guide to lead a discussion with employees about the hazards of driving on wet roads. It can help them understand how to reduce their risk of hydroplaning. Use any of the suggested key points in your talk. Use the form on Page 3 to record meeting details. Consider printing this guide and giving it to drivers.

Why is this topic important?

Key points

- Hydroplaning can make it impossible to control your vehicle, leading to a crash.
- Hydroplaning is common in rainy areas but can occur anywhere.
- Work-related motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause or traumatic workplace fatalities in BC.

What is hydroplaning?

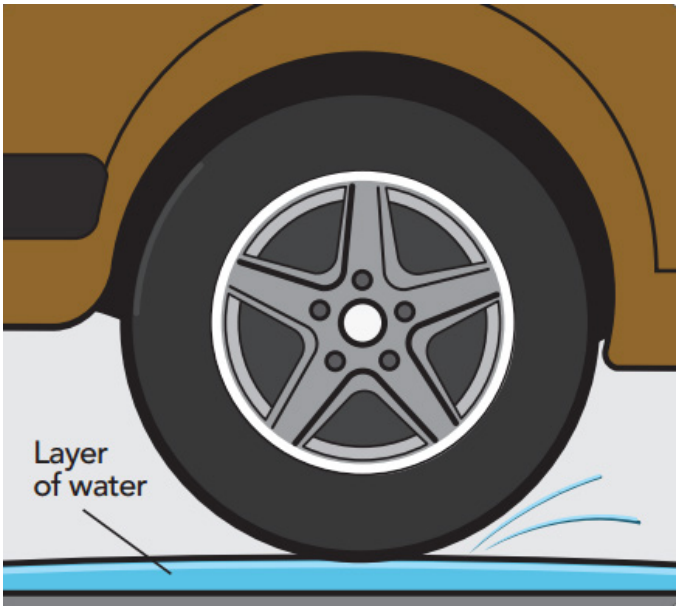
Key points

On wet roads, grooves in your tires move water out of the way so your tire can stay in contact with the road. Under certain conditions, the tire can't move water away fast enough. The tire loses traction because it is floating on the water instead of contacting the road.

Why is hydroplaning hazardous?

Key points

Hydroplaning causes the tire to lose contact with the road so the vehicle won't respond as you try to brake and steer. It may be only momentary. But it can cause a sudden sideways veer to the next lane or off the road. It can also initiate an uncontrollable skid leading to a crash.



When does hydroplaning occur?

Key points

- During and after heavy rain
- On roads that have rutted or grooved surfaces
- On roads that have no slope
- During and after a rain that follows warm, dry weather. This weather allows oily residue to form on the pavement and rain mixes with it to create slippery conditions.
- When roads are slushy

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How to avoid hydroplaning

Key points

Slow down when roads are wet

The risk of hydroplaning increases with speed, particularly above 55 km/hr. Slow down by 15 to 20 km/hr during heavy rain.

Identify routes that are prone to hydroplaning

Avoid roads with bad rutting, known locations of water pooling, etc., on rainy days.

Keep tires properly inflated and regularly rotated

Check the owner's manual for recommended tire pressures. Rotate tires regularly and replace them before tread depth wears to 5/32" (4 mm).

Choose the right tire for the conditions

If you regularly drive in wet conditions, consider buying tires specially designed to prevent hydroplaning. Some performance tires have minimal tread depth, which increases the risk of hydroplaning.

Pay attention to other vehicles

Watch for plumes of spray, twitchy movement, and brake lights from vehicles ahead.

Beware of road ruts and big puddles

Water accumulates in the ruts or grooves of well-travelled roads. The ruts can pull your vehicle if you start to hydroplane. Adjust your lane position slightly to the left or right of those ruts to avoid water accumulations.

Steer around puddles if it's safe to do so. Water is more likely to pool on the right lane.

What to do if your vehicle hydroplanes

Key points

Keep calm

Sudden or exaggerated driving movements are never the right response.

Take your foot off the accelerator

Avoid hard braking. No sharp or quick turns. Wait to feel the tires reconnect with the road surface and regain traction.

Once you have regained control, evaluate why you hydroplaned

Usually, that means slowing down a little. You may want to safely pull off the road to have that conversation with yourself.

Tailgate meeting activities and resources

- Ask drivers about routes they take that are at high risk for hydroplaning (roads that are heavily rutted or with poor drainage).
- Ask drivers to share their experience with hydroplaning. What happened and what did they do?
- Include hydroplaning in driver training.

Know before you go

Before heading out:

- Visit DriveBC.ca for current road conditions.
- Visit RoadSafetyAtWork.ca for tips on ways to safely drive in different weather conditions.

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Road Safety At Work

Tailgate meeting record form:

Date:	**Time:**	**Location:**
Supervisor:	**Discussion leader(s):**	
Topic:		
Handouts:		
Discussion:		
Follow-up item:	**Completion date:**	
Follow-up item:	**Completion date:**	
Follow-up item:	**Completion date:**	
Follow-up item:	**Completion date:**	
Follow-up item:	**Completion date:**	

Notes:

Tailgate meeting participants:

Name	Signature