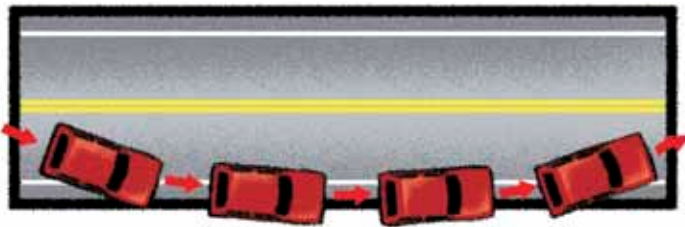


## 10. Driving Emergencies

### Running Off the Pavement

If your vehicle goes onto the shoulder of the road:

1. Stay on the shoulder and steer in a straight line.
2. Take your foot off the accelerator.
3. Apply the brakes very gently.
4. After slowing down, and if traffic permits, ease back onto the pavement, being careful not to overshoot the centre line.



### Blowouts

A front-tire blowout tends to cause the vehicle to swerve to the side of the blowout, making steering very difficult. In the case of a rear-tire blowout, the rear end of the vehicle sways from side to side.

Should a blowout occur:

- Hold the steering wheel firmly and take your foot off the accelerator, allowing your vehicle to slow down gradually.
- Brake **only** when the speed is sufficiently reduced to maintain control.
- Do not turn onto the shoulder of the road until you have your vehicle under control. If the blowout causes your vehicle to swerve onto the shoulder, don't try to get back onto the pavement. Let the vehicle coast to a stop.
- Drive your vehicle off the roadway to a safe spot to change a tire.

**Note:** If you regularly inspect your tires for under inflation, cuts or bulges, you may be able to avoid a blowout. When driving, you may be warned by a thumping sound caused by a bulge in the tire or your vehicle may be pulling sideways because the tire is losing air rapidly. Power steering gives you more power to resist the side pull from a front tire blowout.

## Losing a Wheel

The rules are basically the same as for a blowout.

## Skid Control

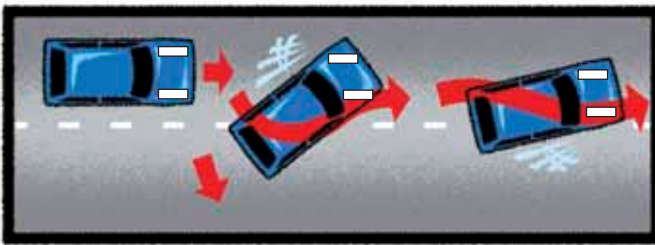
Driving too fast often results in skidding, regardless of weather conditions. In fact, more people are killed or injured in dry-surface skids than in wet-surface skids.

To get control of your vehicle while skidding, you should simultaneously:

- Take your foot off the accelerator or the brake.
- Shift to neutral (or depress the clutch).
- Look and steer in the direction you would like to go.

As the vehicle straightens out (assuming the brakes haven't locked), the front wheels should also be straightened out to prevent a skid in the opposite direction.

To keep from skidding, slow down as you approach danger spots and do not accelerate, brake or change direction quickly.



## Emergency Braking

If you must stop in the shortest distance for an emergency, depress the brake pedal to its maximum. However, with this method you will lose your steering control.

### **Without Anti-lock Brakes**

If your vehicle doesn't have anti-lock brakes, slamming on the brakes will lock your wheels. If all four wheels are locked, the vehicle will likely slide in the direction it was already going. Remember, without an anti-lock braking system, when your brakes are locked, you have very little steering control (if any at all), so do this only in an emergency.

An alternative method is to apply steady brake pressure without locking up the wheels. This is called threshold braking and requires practice and skill in order to perform properly. The advantage here is you maintain steering control as you come to a stop and you may be able to steer around an object rather than having a collision.

### **With Anti-lock Brakes**

Anti-lock braking systems will provide some degree of steering control when the brakes are fully applied. The amount of control will depend on the specific system, so check your owner's manual for the best advice to follow.

## Flooded Engine

Your engine floods when you have too much gas and not enough air in your car's combustion chamber, making it impossible for the gas to ignite. Check your vehicle operating manual for directions.

## Wet Brakes

Your brakes may fail when you go through a large puddle of water. To be sure that they're working:

- Always test the brakes lightly after driving through deep water. They may pull to one side or may not work at all.
- You can "dry" the brakes by driving slowly and applying them lightly.

## Disabled Vehicle

Following are some safety tips to help minimize safety hazards if your vehicle stalls or is involved in an accident:

- If possible move the vehicle clear of traffic and park all four wheels off the travelled portion of the highway.
- Use the starter and low gear to pull your vehicle to the shoulder if you have a standard shift.
- If your vehicle is stalled on a highway or if your speed is well below the speed limit, use the four-way flasher when your vehicle is coming to a stop.
- If you have reflectorized signs and/or flares place them 60 metres in front and behind the vehicle, so that the danger may be seen by approaching drivers.
- If you cannot move your vehicle off the road, raise the hood to warn other motorists.

## Direct Collision Course

If a vehicle suddenly approaches from the opposite direction in your lane:

- Brake hard. If speed can be reduced before the collision, the impact will be less severe.
- Head for the shoulder on the right-hand side of the road and sound the horn. The other driver may suddenly realize their actions and steer back onto their side of the road. **Never swerve to the left to avoid a collision.** You may then be in the path of oncoming traffic.
- Drive into the ditch if necessary. Many collisions are more serious than they have to be, simply because some drivers don't accept the reality of a collision happening to them and "freeze." Better to be in the ditch than be involved in a collision.
- Head for something that is capable of energy absorption to reduce the force on impact — for example, a bush, shrub or snowbank. Better to hit an object with a glancing blow rather than head-on. Sideswiping a guardrail, for instance, and bouncing off (some of the impact being absorbed), with the driver regaining control, has avoided more serious collisions.

By being alert at all times behind the wheel, you may gain that fraction of a second you would not otherwise have to determine your escape route.

## Vehicle on Fire

Since this usually results from an electrical short circuit, turn off the ignition immediately. It's wise to keep a hand fire extinguisher in the passenger compartment of your vehicle. If it is a small fire, use the fire extinguisher or smother flames with earth, sand or large articles of clothing. If it is a large fire, move away from the vehicle and call the Fire Department.

## Vehicle Plunging into Water

If a vehicle ends up in water with the windows closed and intact (not broken), it will float for between 30 seconds and a few minutes. Vehicle occupants have only about one minute to exit before escape becomes impossible. As the vehicle sinks, water is higher on the outside than the inside, therefore water pressure prevents doors from being opened. Once the water rises above the windows, the windows cannot be opened because the water presses the window against the door frame.

If you ever find yourself in this situation, follow these important steps:

1. **Do not panic.**
2. **Seatbelts off.** Children or others who need help, must be released from their seatbelts (starting from the oldest to the youngest, since the older children can help themselves while you attend to the younger ones).
3. **Open or break window.** If they're power windows, roll them down immediately because water will cause a short circuit in the electrical system. If the electric windows don't work, break them by hitting or kicking the window on the edge nearest the front of the car.
4. **Get out immediately,** sending children out before you.

## Vehicle in Contact with Electrical Wires

If you step out from a vehicle in contact with live electrical wires, you could be seriously injured or killed when your feet touch the ground — even if you're wearing rubber boots. Should your vehicle ever be in contact with electrical wires:

1. Stay inside and try to drive away from the wires.
2. If you cannot free your vehicle from the wires, turn on your hazard lights, move off the road as far as you can and remain inside. Warn potential rescuers to stay away from the vehicle and the wires and ask them to contact the police.
3. If your vehicle is on fire and you must leave it, only do so by jumping out so as not to come in contact with both the vehicle and the ground at the same time. Also make sure to jump free of any wires.

## Suggested Emergency Equipment

1. **Standard Emergency Equipment** — shovel, tow rope or chain, booster cables, flashlight, first-aid kit, basic tool kit, flares and fire extinguisher.
2. **Winter Emergency Equipment** — all of #1 plus: hatchet, chains or metal mats, windshield scraper, snow brush, gas line anti-freeze, winter clothing, winter boots, winter hat, mitts and blankets.
3. **Winter Survival Kit** — all of #1 and #2 plus: waterproof matches, compact stove with fuel, candles, sheet of plastic or canvas, light rope, blaze orange flag, carbon dioxide indicator, aluminum foil, tissues, 1.5 kg metal cans with plastic lids, dry foods and soups, plastic utensils.

**Important:** Always ensure your vehicle's fuel tank is full when driving in winter conditions. If you become stranded, your chances of survival are better when you stay with your vehicle.