

# **Safety Tips for Spring Driving: How to Handle Seasonal Hazards**

~Rob Looker

With clocks going forward this Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup> and springtime approaching, you may be anticipating some better driving weather. Spring forward with a little caution though, as there are seasonal hazards to negotiate before summer arrives. These driving tips will help.

## **Slow down on wet roads:**

Rain is a big deal and the deadliest weather-related driving hazard. There's plenty of it at this time of year with spring showers making roads slick when water mixes with oil on the pavement. The first 10 minutes of a light rain can be most dangerous for hydroplaning, when tires slide across a wet surface, particularly at speeds above 35 mph, according to the American Safety Council. Slow down and increase your following distance with the car ahead to five seconds when driving in rain, advises Edmunds, and add an extra second for each additional challenge, like driving after dark.

## **Avoid standing water and large puddles:**

Stay away from the outer lanes where water accumulates and try to drive in the tracks left by vehicles ahead.

## **Beware of potholes:**

Winter often leaves its mark by creating or enlarging potholes in the road, which are no friend to your car or safety. Keep a look out for these unexpected obstacles and drive around them if safe to do so.

## **Replace wiper blades:**

Rain presents the hazard of reduced visibility, so check your wiper blades for wear and replace them if they're not up to the important job of keeping your windshield clear.

## **Inflate tires:**

Tires typically lose pressure in winter and it's a good idea to get out the pressure gauge to see if they need inflating to the recommended level, often indicated on the sticker in the driver's door.

## **Share the road with cyclists and pedestrians:**

More people are choosing to walk, run and cycle to stay active, carry out errands or as an alternative to driving to work, especially when the warmer weather arrives, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Treat bicyclists as you would other drivers, and remember pedestrians have rights on the road, too, particularly at crosswalks, says the NHTSA.

## **Watch for animals:**

Animals are also brushing off the cobwebs and getting out and about in the spring weather, which can pose dangers if they stray onto highways. Slow down so you can stop safely if animals are in the area, and be extra vigilant at dawn and dusk.

Winter may be coming to an end but the new season brings its own challenges. Remembering a few safety tips for spring driving could help you enjoy trouble-free travels enroute to summer.