

DRIVING IN THE WET



Easter marks the start of what is traditionally the wettest time of the year in Sydney and the number of road accidents spike during this period.

In 2010, NRMA Insurance figures revealed there were 500 more collisions in the Sydney metropolitan area in the second half of May compared with the same period in earlier months.

Driving through rain can be hazardous and requires extra care.

Many wet weather accidents are preventable and are caused because many drivers do not change their driving for wet weather conditions.

Here are some tips to help you survive the wet months.

TEN TIPS FOR SURVIVING THE RAIN

HEALTHY,
WEALTHY
& WISE

1. EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION AFTER A LONG DRY SPELL.

During a dry period, engine oil and grease build up on the road over time. When mixed with water from a new rainfall, the road becomes extremely slick. Continued rainfall will eventually wash away the oil, but the first few hours can be the most dangerous.

2. ALLOW FOR MORE TRAVEL TIME.

Slow down when the roads are wet.

3. BRAKE EARLIER AND WITH LESS FORCE THAN YOU WOULD NORMALLY.

Not only does this increase the stopping distance between you and the car in front of you, it also lets the driver behind you know that you're slowing down.

4. DON'T USE CRUISE CONTROL.

If you 'aqua plane', there's the chance your car could actually accelerate. Cruise control also allows drivers to be less vigilant and to take their foot away from the pedals, not a great idea when reaction time is so important.

5. TURN ON YOUR HEADLIGHTS,

even when there's a light sprinkle. It helps you see the road, and more importantly, it helps other motorists

see you. However, don't blast your high beams in the rain or fog — it will obscure your view further, as the light will reflect back at you off the water droplets in the air.

6. WATCH OUT FOR PEDESTRIANS.

An ordinarily observant pedestrian may become distracted by fiddling with an umbrella or raincoat. Raindrops deaden sound, so the usual audio clues for measuring car distances become obscured.

7. PULL OVER AND WAIT IT OUT

if it's raining so hard that you can't see the road or the car in front of you.

8. GIVE A TRUCK OR BUS EXTRA DISTANCE.

Their extra-large tyres can create enough spray to block your vision completely. Avoid passing one, but if you must pass, do it as quickly as safety allows.

9. DEFOG YOUR WINDOWS.

Rain will quickly cause your windshield to fog up. Switch on both front and rear defrosters and make sure the air conditioning is turned on.

10. KEEP YOUR VEHICLE IN GOOD CONDITION

and regularly check brakes, tyre pressures, tyre tread depth and windscreen wipers.