32. Wind, Rain & Snow

Wind... The wind can cause severe problems for road users. Be especially careful when passing gaps on sheltered roads. A gap in the shelter that is offered by walls or hedges can affect cyclists, who may be blown into your path, and people, especially the elderly, who may lose their balance. Strong wind can also affect lorries and vehicles with trailers (for example, caravans). Cars travelling at speed can also be unstable in high wind.

CAUTION
Large vehicles can be blown off course in strong winds
LONG VEHICLE

Rain... Rain affects what you can hear, what you can see and your grip on the road. In wet weather, windows are more likely to mist up. You can avoid this by using the heater fan to keep air circulating. Windscreen wipers can be overloaded in heavy rain but leave smears on the screen in light rain. Other vehicles are harder to see in the wet. Dipped headlamps can help you to be seen (this is compulsory if visibility drops below 100 metres).

Other vehicles will be harder to hear in the rain. This is because of the noise from the rain and from your heater fan. You will have to make more visual checks to the sides of the car to compensate for lost information because of what you can't hear.

Aquaplaning

You must be sure that your tyres comply with the legal tread depth requirements in order to maintain your grip in wet weather. The tread will allow the water to be displaced and lessen the chance of skidding. A light shower after a long dry spell in the summer can leave the road as slippery as ice. You will expect to encounter ice in the winter; you are less likely to expect an ice-like surface in the summer. Remember the weather rule: 'Slow Down for Safety'.

Snow and ice... Perhaps this is the most obvious weather hazard of all. Despite this, many people have accidents in winter conditions every year. Get ready for winter by ensuring that both you and your car are fully prepared. Prepare your car by having it serviced at the start of the cold weather and keep a winter emergency kit in the boot. Prepare yourself by attending a skid training or winter driving course (your instructor will advise on this).

ICE
Road Closed

Lesson Notes:

DriverActive 2018 – Get It Right First Time!