Tips and techniques for driving in the rain

Driving on wet roads is very different than driving on dry roads. Adjust your speed when driving in the rain, and drive defensively. Take these preventive measures:

- Prevent skids by driving slowly and carefully, especially on curves.

- Steer and brake with a light touch. When you need to stop or slow down, don't brake hard or lock the wheels and risk a skid. Maintain mild pressure on the brake pedal.

If you do find yourself in a skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas, and carefully steer in the direction you want the front of the vehicle to go. For vehicles without anti-lock brakes, avoid using your brakes. This procedure, known as steering into the skid, will bring the back end of your vehicle in line with the front. If your vehicle has anti-lock brakes, press firmly on the brakes as you steer into the skid.

While skidding on wet pavement is frightening, hydroplaning is nerve-wracking. Hydroplaning happens when the water in front of your tires builds up faster than your vehicle's weight can push it out of the way. The water pressure causes your vehicle to rise up and slide on a thin layer of water between your tires and the road. At this point, your vehicle can be completely out of contact with the road, and you are in danger of skidding or drifting out of your lane or off the road.

- To avoid hydroplaning, keep your vehicle's tires properly inflated and maintain good tire tread.

- Slow down when roads are wet, and stay away from puddles.

- If you find your vehicle hydroplaning, do not brake or turn suddenly. This could send your vehicle into a skid. Ease your foot off the gas until the vehicle slows and you can feel the road again. If you need to brake, do it gently with light pumping actions. If your vehicle has anti-lock brakes, you can brake normally. The vehicle's computer will mimic a pumping action when necessary.

Most importantly, practice defensive driving – you can avoid having to use any of these measures.