

Safety Bulletin

10 Tips for Surviving Autumn's Wind, Rain and Fog

The clouds start rolling in. The trees begin to sway. Droplets hit your windshield. A storm has arrived. That means you must take extra caution as you drive down the highway.

While wind, rain and fog can happen anywhere at any time of year, in autumn the winds tend to get stronger, the rain tends to last longer, and changes in temperature creates more fog. That means you must be ready. When you hit inclement weather, follow these 10 safety tips:



- 1. Plan ahead.** Check the weather forecast before you start your route. Also, perform a thorough pre-trip inspection. In particular, make sure your tires are fully inflated and your cargo is secure.
- 2. Reduce your speed.** The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration recommends you lower your speed by at least 1/3 on wet roads. That means, if you're on a highway with a 70 mph speed limit, you should go no faster than 45 mph. The worse the wind, rain or fog gets, the slower you should travel.
- 3. Know your load.** If you are hauling a light load or an empty, you're more likely to have trouble driving in the wind. Your trailer can act like a giant 500-square-foot wind sail, especially in strong gusts.
- 4. Drive with caution as soon as it starts raining.** When rain starts, water mixes with oil on the roadways, creating particularly slippery conditions.
- 5. Hit the lights.** Most states require you to use your low-beam headlights whenever it rains. In fog, use your low-beams, fog lights and hazards to help other drivers see you easier. Do not use high beams in fog; they make visibility worse.
- 6. Use your wipers and defroster.** Both will clear moisture from the windshield and help you maintain the highest level of visibility in rain or fog.
- 7. Watch your following distance.** Give yourself enough room so you can safely stop as needed.
- 8. Brake lightly.** When you need to stop in rain, wind or fog, go as easy on the brakes as possible. Slamming on the brakes increase your chances of entering into a skid.
- 9. Stay in your lane.** Minimizing lane changes can help you stay safe in rain, wind or fog. Also, when fog decreases your visibility, stay in the right-hand lane and let the white line (or reflectors) on the side of the road guide you.
- 10. Know when to park it.** If severe weather makes travel too risky, find the nearest truck stop or rest area and wait until the storm passes.

