



CALTRANS COMMUTER ALERT

13-198

Date: Thursday, July 25, 2013
District: 8 - San Bernardino
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TIPS FOR DRIVING IN EXTREME WEATHER CONDITONS

San Bernardino – During the summer months in the Inland Empire, residents and travelers can expect continuous dry days of high temperatures and in some cases, extreme heat warnings. The traveling public should be aware that the Region is also exposed to monsoon weather conditions that can affect roadway conditions. Below are some tips to consider before a trip across desert and/or to other remote areas within the region are considered.

- “Know before you go!” Go to Caltrans’ “Quick Map” at <http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/> or to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) website at <http://cad.chp.ca.gov/>. Listen to the radio or watch local news on television for road conditions before and during your trip.
- Make sure your vehicle is in good condition. Ensure your head and tail lamps, along with your turn signals, are working properly. Replace worn windshield wiper blades, keep windshield washer fluid topped off and see that the brakes are in good condition.
- If you are stopped in traffic, put the car in "park" and lightly step on the gas to help circulate coolant.
- Keep an eye on the lights and gauges – if your indicator light(s) come on in hot weather, turn off your air conditioner and turn on your vehicle’s heater to its highest and hottest setting. It will be uncomfortable, but it will help draw some of the heat away from the engine. Find a safe location, park and call for assistance.
- High temperatures and hot pavement can have an effect on tires that are worn or not properly inflated and could result in flats or blowouts. At high speeds this can be extremely dangerous causing your vehicle to lose control and/or overturn.
- Pull over and give your tires a break when driving long distances and check your tire pressure frequently – carry a tire gauge with you.
- Take your tires to a professional to have the tread inspected routinely. Replace worn out tires.
- If you have a blow out:
 - Step on the accelerator for an instant to preserve vehicle momentum (or at least maintain constant accelerator pedal pressure).
 - Offset the pulling caused by the blown tire by gently counter steering to keep the vehicle in its lane.
 - Once the vehicle is stabilized, gently slow down and begin to carefully pull over to the side of the road.
- During summer months, moist air from nearby oceans flows into areas of low pressure and creates the “monsoon” storm effect. Monsoons are wind systems that reverse directions with the change of seasons. They are often associated with heavy rainfall, thunder, lightning, and hail and may cause flash flooding.

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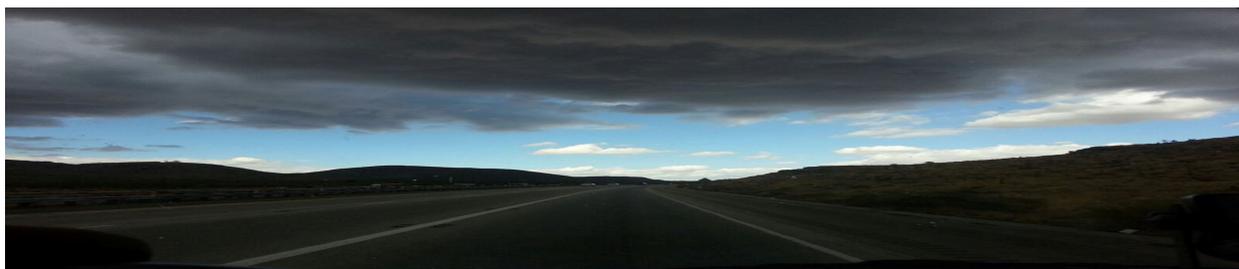
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- Be aware of your surroundings – look for warning signs and always obey posted signs.
- First and foremost **SLOW DOWN**. The posted speed limit may not be a safe speed to travel in bad weather. Slower travel speeds allow for safer braking and stopping distances.
- 2/10's of an inch of water can cause debris flow or earth movement.
- Leave plenty of room between you and the vehicle ahead of you and be aware of the vehicles around you in other travel lanes. Braking and shorter stopping distances will be affected by wet roads and slippery roadway surfaces.
- Watch carefully for water pooling on the roadway surface as this could cause your vehicle to slide or hydroplane.
- Do not enter an area where the roadway has been closed by barricades due to flooding. You don't know how deep the water is or how fast it is running. It is against the law and very dangerous to drive into a flooded area. **TURN AROUND – DON'T DROWN!**
- Drive with your headlights on. This increases your visibility to other vehicles.
- At night, slow down and pay close attention to changing road and weather conditions.
- Strong winds can be associated with a monsoon storm. Watch for blowing dust and if at all possible, avoid driving into a dust storm.
- If you cannot avoid the dust storm drive with your headlights on and slow down. Do not stop on the roadway or on the emergency shoulder area. Pull completely off the roadway surface, stop, and turn off all vehicle lights and take your foot off of the brake.
- Bring WATER, snacks, necessary medications, sturdy walking shoes and a hat. Stop periodically to refresh yourself. Bring moist towelettes and always have a charged cell phone.
- ALWAYS wear your safety restraints.
- Be patient and courteous. Remember other motorists are facing the same weather conditions as you.
- California Safety Roadside Rest Areas (SRRAs) may close without notice for repairs on I-10, I-15, and I-40. Be sure you plan your trip ahead to stop at other locations for facilities.
- **NEVER LEAVE A PERSON OR PET IN A HOT CAR.**



Sources: www.response.com
www.tirerack.com

Arizona Department of Transportation <http://www.azdps.gov/Media/News/View/?p=319>

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