



CALTRANS COMMUTER ALERT

12-210

Date: Friday, August 17, 2012
District: 8 - Riverside and San Bernardino Counties
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“TURN AROUND DON’T DROWN”

Inland Empire – Monsoon weather is becoming the pattern over the last few summers in the Inland Empire and flash flooding has closed many state routes with severe damage. A desert monsoon storm can be dangerous or even deadly. Conditions can range from high winds to blowing dust to torrential rains which can create hazardous driving conditions. Caltrans District 8 has compiled some safety tips to assist motorists who drive on state highways during these unpredictable weather events.

- First and foremost **SLOW DOWN**. The posted speed limit may not be a safe speed to travel in bad weather. On wet roads your vehicle will have less traction than on a dry road. Slower travel speeds allow for safer braking and stopping distances.
- 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.
- If flooding occurs, get to higher ground. Get out of areas subject to flooding. This includes dips, low spots, canyons, washes, etc.
- **NEVER CROSS RUNNING WATER!**
- Watch carefully for water pooling on the roadway surface as this could cause your vehicle to slide or hydroplane. Avoid low-water crossings.
- 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. Besides, it is against the law and very dangerous to drive into a flooded area!
- As little as ten inches of water can float average-sized cars, mini-vans, SUVs and trucks. Strength of the flow is the critical force.
- One cubic foot of water is the size of a basketball. Imagine 100's of basketballs flowing by or under your car every second – your vehicle can be quickly swept away!
- 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.
- Make sure your vehicle is in good condition. Ensure your head and tail lamps along with your turn signals are working properly. Replace worn out tires for better traction and maintain proper tire air pressure, replace worn out windshield wiper blades, keep windshield washer fluid topped off, and see that the brakes are in good condition.
- If a traffic signal is out, treat the intersection as a 4-way stop.
- Be prepared for unforeseen delays, such as flooded roads, construction or other traffic delays. Carry extra food and water in your vehicle.

MORE



**SLOW FOR THE
CONE ZONE**
CALTRANS



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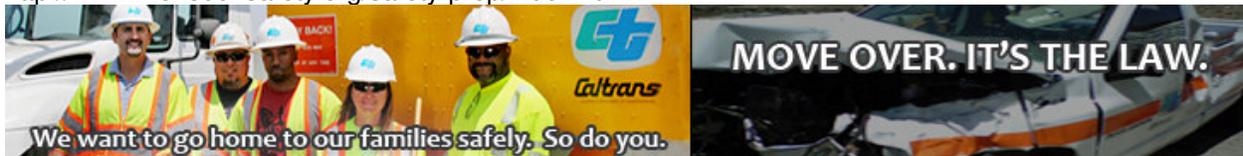
- If you suffer a mechanical breakdown or tire failure, remain calm, slow down, keep the steering wheel straight, and drive the vehicle to a safe area as far from traffic as possible.
- When in doubt, wait it out, or find a safer route.
- **ALWAYS** wear your safety restraints.
- Be patient and courteous. Remember other motorists are facing the same weather conditions as you.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO! Go to Caltrans "Quick Map" at <http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/> or the California Highway Patrol current traffic conditions at <http://cad.chp.ca.gov/>.

Sources:

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

<http://www.monsoonsafety.org/safety-prep/index.htm>



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