

Driving in Flood Waters

Water's powerful force can easily overtake vehicles caught in a flood. Some things you need to be aware of in regard to water over parking lots, streets and highways:

Facts about flooding and driving:

- Pay attention to barricades. Don't ignore them by driving past them.
- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars, causing loss of control or possible stalling.
- One foot of water will float almost any vehicle. (Remember, your tires are filled with air and they act as pontoons.)
- Two feet of rushing water can sweep away most vehicles — including SUVs and pick-ups.
- Do not drive through standing water on roads or in parking lots. (Even if there is a “pilot vehicle” to guide people through flooded areas, every vehicle is different and you don't know how your vehicle will perform in flooded areas.)
- The average automobile only has about 6 inches of clearance to the bottom of the car. A car can be swept off the road in 12 inches of moving water, and roads covered by water are prone to collapse.
- Driving through flood waters can cause your car to stall out due to what is called “hydrolocking”. Hydrolocking is when water is sucked into the engine. The water may only go as far as your air filter, which will stall your car, but it can go even further. If you are going at any higher speeds or the engine RPMs are higher it will suck the water through the filter, through the induction system, into the engine itself. Even if the water doesn't stall your car immediately, it can bring your car to a screeching halt down the road. Repair costs can vary from a couple hundred bucks to a complete engine overhaul, which can cost thousands.
- Do not drive through flooded areas. If you see a flooded-out road ahead, turn around. Find another route to your destination.
- Even if the water appears shallow enough to cross, don't try it. Water hides dips in the road. Worse yet, there may be no road at all under the water. Flooding can scour away the entire road surface and a significant amount of ground beneath.
- If your car stalls, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground. We want everyone to arrive safely at their destinations and to go home to family at the end of the day. Be alert, be aware and be safe!!