

What to Do If You Are Driving During a Severe Thunderstorm or Heavy Rain

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- Pull over.
- Stay in the vehicle.
- Be alert for flooding.

You should:

- **Pull safely onto the shoulder of the road and stop, making sure you are away from any trees or other tall objects that could fall on the vehicle.**
- **Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain subsides.** Heavy rain produced by thunderstorms can greatly reduce visibility. Emergency flashers will alert other drivers that you have stopped. Keep the windows closed. You are safer from lightning in a vehicle than out in the open.
- **Avoid contact with metal or other conducting surfaces outside or inside the vehicle.** Lightning that strikes nearby can travel through wet ground to your vehicle. The steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal. Rubber tires provide no protection from lightning. Avoid contact with potential conductors to reduce your chance of being shocked. Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your vehicle, you are much safer inside than outside.
- **Avoid flooded roads.** Many flood fatalities are caused by people attempting to drive through water or people playing in high water. The depth of water is not always obvious. The roadbed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped. Rapidly rising water may stall the engine, engulf the vehicle and its occupants, and sweep them away. Look out for flooding at highway dips, bridges, and low areas. As little as six inches of water may cause you to lose control of your vehicle and two feet (0.6 meter) of flowing water will carry away most automobiles, including SUVs and pickup trucks. (See Appendix: What to Do When There Is Flooding.)

What to Do After a Severe Thunderstorm

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- Stay informed.
- Be alert to hazards.
- Help others.

You should:

- **Continue using a NOAA Weather Radio or listening to a local radio or television station for updated information and instructions.** Access may be limited to some parts of the community or roads may be blocked.
- **Help people who require special assistance**—infants, elderly people, those without transportation, large families who may need additional help in an emergency situation, people with disabilities, and the people who care for them.
- **Stay away from storm-damaged areas** to avoid putting yourself at further risk from the residual effects of severe thunderstorms. Sightseers cause additional problems and hamper local responders assisting those in need.
- **Watch out for fallen power lines and report them immediately.** Reporting potential hazards will get the utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further hazard and injury. If assistance is needed in your area and telephone communications are disrupted, go to your nearest fire or police station to request assistance.