



KEEP SAFE

A Monthly Publication for Texas Electric Cooperatives

November 2011

Driving in severe weather conditions

Visibility is a key issue in inclement weather. Make sure you have adequate visibility and that others can see you through proper use of your headlights, windshield wipers and defroster. Whether you are driving in rain, snow or fog, there are steps you can take to drive safely.

Rain

Wet pavement increases your vehicle's chance of skidding. Even a light rain will mix with the oils and grease on pavement, causing the roads to be slippery. When driving on wet roads, slow down and increase your following distance.

If your vehicle does begin to skid, slowly remove your foot from the gas pedal and carefully steer in the direction you want the front of your vehicle to go. If your vehicle does not have anti-lock brakes (ABS), avoid using your brakes. If your vehicle does have ABS, brake firmly and steer into the skid.

Hydroplaning is another driving hazard caused by wet pavement. This occurs when the water in front of your tires builds up faster than your vehicle's weight can push it out of the way. Your vehicle will lose contact with the road and begin to skid. Avoid the instinct to brake or turn suddenly. Ease your foot off of the gas pedal until you feel your tires gripping the road again.

To avoid skidding and hydroplaning:

- Make sure your tires are inflated to the correct pressure. Refer to the vehicle's owner's manual or the manufacturer's plate on the driver door for the proper tire pressure.
- Maintain good tread on your tires and replace your tires when necessary.
- Drive slower when the roads are wet and avoid puddles.
- Attempt to drive in the tire tracks of the vehicle in front of you.

Snow

Many of the same issues occur when rain turns to sleet or snow. Stay alert, drive defensively, and only drive when necessary during severe weather conditions. Before the weather turns cold, schedule a winter check-up for your vehicle. This check-up should include inspection of:

- Ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and fan belts
- Spark plugs — change and adjust them if necessary
- Air, fuel and emission filters, as well as the PCV valve
- Distributor
- Battery
- Tires for air, wear and tread depth
- Antifreeze level and its freezing temperatures

Prepare an emergency survival kit that includes a properly inflated spare tire, shovel, jumper cables, tow and tire chains, bag of salt or kitty litter and a tool kit. Also include a flashlight, compass, first aid kit, windshield cleaner, ice scraper, snow brush, matches, scissors and cord, wool blanket and non-perishable food items *(severe weather continued from front)*

Fog

If you find yourself driving in a dense fog:

- Slow down your speed gradually.
- Increase your following distance, leaving more room between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Use your low-beam headlights. In dense fog, high-beam headlights produce more glare.
- Clean windows frequently, using your windshield wipers and washer fluid, to increase visibility.
- Run your defroster to clear the windshield as much as possible.
- Use the road markings to keep to the right edge of the roadway.
- Pay attention to avoid vehicles in the emergency lane.
- If the fog is too bad, pull off of the road and turn on your flashers while leaving on your headlights.

November – Fine-tune your home heating

To keep your house warm and cozy this season without jeopardizing the well-being of your family, take some time to make your home heating safer.

Heating system, fireplaces and wood stoves

- ◆ Hire a trained professional to inspect and clean your home's central heating system, and repair leaks or other problems.
- ◆ Fireplaces and wood-burning stoves should be inspected each year and cleaned or repaired as needed.
- ◆ For fireplaces and wood stoves, burn only seasoned hardwood like oak, ash and maple.
- ◆ Do not burn trash or cardboard boxes because these items burn unevenly and may contain poisons or cause a home fire.
- ◆ Open flues before fireplaces are used, and use sturdy screens or glass doors to keep embers from escaping.
- ◆ Keep young children away from any home heating source to avoid contact burn injuries.

Portable space heaters

- ◆ Make sure portable space heaters have been approved for safety — look for a lab-testing label such as ETL, UL or CSA.
- ◆ Space heaters, appropriately, need a lot of space — place them at least three feet from furniture, people, pets, curtains or any other object.
- ◆ An adult should be in the room whenever a space heater is on, and that person should turn off the heater before leaving the room.

Carbon monoxide dangers

- ◆ Guard against carbon monoxide (CO) — a deadly gas that you cannot see, smell or taste — by installing at least one CO alarm near sleeping areas and in the basement.
- ◆ To avoid CO dangers, never use fuel-burning equipment such as a gas or charcoal grill, or a portable generator inside your home or in a closed garage.

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING



2012 Loss Control Conference

Mark your calendar for the 2012 Loss Control Conference scheduled March 14 – 16, 2012. TEC's Loss Control Conference will be held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel.

Hope to see you there!

2012 TEC Loss Control Scholarship Application

Now Available on TEC's Website

The 2012 TEC Loss Control Scholarship is available to the sons and daughters of electric cooperative, municipal and contractor employees participating in TEC's Loss Control services.


Applicants must be a 2012 graduate of a Texas high school or receiving a GED equivalent the same academic year a scholarship is awarded.

Please visit the Loss Control page on the TEC website to download the scholarship application - www.texas-ec.org.

Application postmark deadline is January 13, 2012.



Texas Electric Cooperatives

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

2012 TEC Loss Control Schools (34 Schools)

Transformer School (McGregor)	January 10-13
Basic Pole Climbing School (Hondo)	January 10-13
Metering School (Gonzales)	January 17-20
Regulator Recloser Capacitor School (Merkel)	January 24-27
Transformer School (Livingston)	February 7-10
Regulator Recloser Capacitor School (Tahoka)	February 14-17
Troubleshooting School (Gonzales)	February 21-24
Metering School (McGregor)	March 6-9
Advanced Pole Climbing School (Gonzales)	March 6-9
Transformer School (Gonzales)	March 27-30
Metering School (Livingston)	April 10-13
Troubleshooting School (Tahoka)	April 17-20
Basic Pole Climbing School (Gonzales)	April 17-20
Hotline 1-4 School (Henderson)	April 23-27
Underground School (Quitman)	April 30-May 4
Transformer School (Tahoka)	May 8-11
Hotline 1-4 School (Merkel)	May 21-25
Digger Operator Training School (Merkel)	May 21-25
Underground School (Gonzales)	June 4-8
Troubleshooting School (Livingston)	June 12-15
Basic Pole Climbing School (Tahoka)	June 19-22
Regulator Recloser Capacitor School (McGregor)	June 26-29
Metering School (Tahoka)	July 10-13
Regulator Recloser Capacitor School (Livingston)	July 24-27
Regulator Recloser Capacitor School (Gonzales)	August 7-10
Metering School (Merkel)	August 21-24
Underground School (Levelland)	August 28-31
Hotline 1-4 School (Gonzales)	September 10-14
Digger Operator Training School (Gonzales)	September 10-14
Underground School (McGregor)	September 17-21
Hotline 1-4 School (Levelland)	October 8-12
Basic Pole Climbing School (San Augustine)	October 9-12
Underground School (Merkel)	October 15-19
Hotline 1-4 School (Livingston)	October 22-26