

Wet Weather Driving

Now we can guarantee that at some point we will be driving in the wet, it's time to reflect on a few fatigue issues that will affect you even more in the wet conditions.

Let's consider the outcomes of sleep restricted drivers that will be exacerbated in wet weather:

- **Slowed reactions** – In most cases, it takes a vehicle longer to stop on a wet road, so a fatigued driver will need to leave a bigger gap between them and the vehicle in front because they may react slower;
- **Poorer judgement** – A fatigued driver has poorer judgement, and this will be made worse in wet conditions due to reduced visibility of both you and other drivers who may need to avoid a crash. Don't pull in front of trucks leading up to intersections (ever) but especially not in the wet;
- **Reduced coordination** – uncoordinated movements will be made worse in the wet due to slippery surfaces;
- **Reduced ability to read the behaviours of other drivers** – Other drivers will be influenced by pools of water on the road, or generally slippery conditions and can be unpredictable;
- **Poor memory** – when a fatigued driver starts zoning out they often forget parts of their driving plan, such as when to merge or leave a carriageway. This can lead to sudden attempts to manoeuvre a vehicle when they suddenly remember all too late;
- **Decreased tolerance for other's mistakes** – A tired driver is intolerant of any mistakes, no matter how small and even if the inconvenience only costs him/her a couple of seconds of driving time.

Now that you might better understand how your fatigue behaviours can influence yours' and others' driving safety, consider a few other issues:

- **Aqua-planing** – Use of cruise control has been an issue for some people who found that their vehicle aqua-planed badly on the wet road whilst on cruise control. Wet weather driving is not a good time to test this theory;
- **Use of a heater/demister** – This generally puts heat on a driver's face making them sleepy very quickly. Use the demister when you need to, then turn the heat down to your feet;
- **Water spray from trucks and other vehicles.** This is hard as you may find it hard to see and you must choose whether to slow down or use a passing lane to go past the vehicle, which has added risks of getting harder to see as you get closer. If it takes a few extra minutes to get there, then it's a small price to pay compared to the risk involved in passing;
- **Speed differentials** – many drivers slow down in the wet while others use the posted speed limit. This causes a speed differential which places many vehicles at risk of crashing on multi-lane roads and carriageways. Be aware of this and be prepared for passing vehicles to be travelling at higher speeds, and
- **Add more time to the start of your trip.** Plan to get to where you are going early enough to grab a coffee or have a chat before a meeting or the start of work. Having spare time allows you to drive safer, considering all the risks on the road. It also allows drivers to drive to conditions and not attempt to speed to avoid being late.

