

# Safe driving - keep your car in good condition for when the rains come

Issued by [Irvine Partners](#)

11 Nov 2022

The weather is coming along nicely for fun-loving South Africans and leisure travellers, but changing weather conditions at this time of the year throughout most of the country usually means lots of rain and stormy weather - and thus more potential for road accidents.



The summer rainy season will soon start and drivers should ensure that their cars are ready to handle the challenges that rainy weather can bring.

Here are things to do now to get your car ready for the rainy season:

## **Get a grip!**

Head of MiWay Blink, Keletso Mpisane says, "Tyres lose grip when driving in wet conditions. The best way to offset this is to periodically check that the tread on your tyres is good. If a tyre is smooth, you could end up skidding on a wet road, so buy a new tyre now, before you find yourself in that situation. Also check that your tyres are always inflated correctly. Over or under-inflation may reduce traction even more. "

## **Regular check up**

The overall condition of your car should be top of your checklist of priorities; however, due to the costs, many people skip it until it's too late.

"Unfortunately, many people wait until it's too late to check up on the state of their cars. They wait for the car to give them signs of something being wrong, like an engine noise or squeaking breaks, rather than regularly servicing the car according to schedule," warns Mpisane.

Windscreens, breaks, tyres and lights can prove to be a matter of life and death while driving in rainy conditions, so Mpisane advises they should be regularly checked by certified mechanics and dealers, and not replaced with car products

bought from parking lots and robots.

### **Good driving behaviour during bad rains**

No matter how slow traffic may be or how tempting driving faster may seem, don't speed when the conditions are wet. Avoid driving through lots of water in a dip in the road or crossing a swollen river - you run the risk of having your car washed away but the water could also seriously damage the vehicle's engine and on-board computer.

There is also a risk of driving into potholes, which will affect your car's wheel alignment, making it less safe to drive.

### **Technology that helps you sync with forecasts**

The car insurance industry has evolved to a point where the insurer will send out a message about anticipated heavy rains or hail that is due to come at a particular time. You can plan your travels around this information to make sure that the forecast is clear and safer to drive.

"The MiWay Blink app pinpoints a customer's current location which makes it possible for customer alerts when there's a hailstorm headed in their direction. This prepares them to arrange their travels accordingly," according to Mpisane.

### **Check your demister is working properly**

The demister, which is a device incorporating a heater and/or blower used in your motor vehicle, should be kept working at all times.

It allows you to clear moisture and mist from your front windscreen when the car drives in cool or cold conditions. The mist is caused by the inside of the car being warmer and from lack of ventilation since you can't open the windows because of the rain.

### **Brake it or make it!**

Ensure you regularly maintain your brakes. To test your brakes after going through a puddle, tap them a few times to test the grip.

If you are not sure about car parts, make a booking for the vehicle with a certified specialist to carefully check that various parts are in proper working order, including the brakes, advises Mpisane.

"When cleaning your car, avoid steam-cleaning the brake system, particularly with powerful steam cleaners at car washes. Steam-cleaning the vehicle brake system is likely to negatively impact the performance of the brakes," she further advises.

It's better to be safe than sorry. Check your car in for a full check-up to make sure that you are ready for the rainy season - not only can this save you money, it could also improve your safety on the roads. This is one of the more important investments you can make.

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