

## SPRING DRIVING HAZARDS

As winter fades and warmer weather arrives, spring introduces a new set of roadway hazards that can catch even experienced drivers off guard. Longer days, rapidly changing temperatures, spring rain, and increased pedestrian activity all contribute to a dynamic driving environment. Understanding these hazards and taking simple preventive steps can help reduce collisions, injuries, and vehicle damage as the seasons change.

### **SUN GLARE AND REDUCED VISIBILITY**

Spring often brings intense sun positioned low in the sky during morning and late afternoon driving. This creates severe glare that can temporarily impair visibility and make it difficult to see pedestrians, cyclists, other vehicles, and traffic signals. Sun glare is especially hazardous when approaching intersections, cresting hills, or traveling eastbound in the morning and westbound in the evening. Even a brief reduction in visibility can significantly increase stopping distance and reaction time.

#### **To reduce risk:**

- Keep windshields clean both inside and out.
- Use polarized sunglasses to improve visual clarity.
- Reduce speed when driving directly into sun glare.
- Increase following distance to allow additional reaction time.
- Utilize sun visors and avoid looking directly toward bright reflections.

### **POTHOLES, BROKEN PAVEMENT AND ROAD DAMAGE**

Spring thaw often reveals road damage left behind by winter conditions. Freeze-thaw cycles can cause cracks, buckling, and potholes that may damage tires, suspension, and steering components. For commercial vehicles, sudden impacts may also contribute to load shifting or loss of control.

#### **Drivers should remain alert for:**

- Deep potholes hidden beneath puddles.
- Uneven pavement and frost heaves.
- Loose gravel or crumbling shoulders.
- Rutted lanes on high-traffic corridors.

## SPRING THAWS: SOFT SHOULDERS AND EDGE DROP-OFFS

As ground moisture increases and soil softens, road shoulders can become unstable. Soft shoulders may pull a tire off the pavement unexpectedly, increasing the risk of loss of control or rollover, particularly for high-center or heavily loaded vehicles. Edge drop-offs are another common spring hazard. As pavement edges break away during thawing conditions, a sudden height difference can develop between the roadway surface and the shoulder. If a tire leaves the pavement, slow down gradually and carefully ease back onto the roadway. Avoid sudden steering corrections.

### Drivers should:

- Avoid traveling with wheels near the pavement edge.
- Stay centered within the lane, particularly on rural or narrow roads.
- Reduce speed when approaching soft, muddy, or unpaved shoulders.

## RAIN, STANDING WATER AND HYDROPLANING

Spring storms can develop quickly, creating slick roads and reducing visibility. Water can mix with winter sand, salt, and oil residue, forming a slippery surface that increases the risk of hydroplaning. Standing water may also conceal hazards such as deep ruts, broken pavement, or debris.

### Safe driving practices include:

- Slowing down in wet conditions.
- Avoiding hard braking or sudden steering movements.
- Increasing following distance to allow adequate stopping time.
- Using headlights in rain or low-light conditions to improve visibility.
- If hydroplaning occurs, gently ease off the accelerator and steer straight while avoiding sudden braking or turning.

## CHILDREN PLAYING, PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

Warmer weather encourages more outdoor activity. Children may play near roadways, chase balls, or move unpredictably. Cyclists, runners, and dog walkers also appear in greater numbers, especially near schools, parks, and residential areas.

### To reduce collision risk:

- Slow down and remain alert in neighborhoods and school zones.
- Watch for early signs of activity such as bicycles, toys, or parked vehicles with open doors.
- Expect children to move unpredictably and anticipate sudden movements.
- Avoid distractions and maintain full attention in pedestrian-dense areas.





# Knowledge Verification

Please answer, and forward a completed copy to your Safety Department/Safety Representative.

- 1. Sun glare can significantly reduce visibility during morning and late-day driving.  True  False
- 2. Soft shoulders created by spring thaws can increase the risk of loss of control.  True  False
- 3. It is safe to drive through large puddles since they pose no risk to your vehicle.  True  False
- 4. Spring weather often increases pedestrian and cyclist activity near roadways.  True  False

Driver's Name:

Driver's Signature:

Witness Name:

Date:



# Online Learning Library



At Old Republic Canada, we value safety and education. Our online Learning Library is a tool our customers can use to enhance their training efforts and keep safety on the forefront of their employees' minds. Below are some additional titles that can be accessed on any mobile device, computer, or tablet. Simply go to <http://orican.infinitt-i.net> to get started.

- Value Driven Driving:
  - Module 1 - Preventing Rear-End Crashes
  - Module 2 - Preventing Loss of Control Crashes
  - Module 3 - Preventing Lane Change Crashes

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