

# How To Control That Skid

A skid can be one of the most fearsome experiences a driver can endure or it can be merely routine. It depends upon whether or not you know what to expect and how to

control it. A driver who has experienced several types of skids seldom panics when his car breaks away on slippery surfaces; he remains in control of the situation. Here are a few facts to better help you understand and anticipate skidding.

Generally, your car will go into one of three common forms of skid: rear-end breakaway, four-wheel slide or spin-out.



VEERING INTO A PATCH of snow for more traction, this contestant in an ice run approaches the finish line. Runs on frozen lakes provide good practice of driving on icy highways as well as sport. Contestants cover the mile course at speeds as high as 60 miles per hour.

In the case of the rear-end breakaway, which may have

been caused by uneven braking action or smooth rear tires, the car will tend to swing 180 degrees, pivoting on the front wheels. If anticipated in time, this may be corrected by turning the front wheels in the direction of the skid, called countersteering.

A four-wheel slide is caused by applying the brakes too severely on a slick surface. With the wheels locked you have no control over the direction your car may be taking until you release the brakes and permit the tires to regain normal rolling friction. Obviously, additional braking pressure will not slow you down, but gentle pumping of the brakes will help if you can maintain a light touch with your foot.

The spin-out is similar to the rear-end breakaway, except that you have lost control of the front wheels as well and you are likely to be traveling at a greater rate of speed. The only measure you can take to correct this frightening skid is to counter steer and hope you will contact a section of road surface on which you can get gripping action.

Other forms of skids include fishtailing, from excessive acceleration and hydroplaning, where your tires are virtually skimming over a thin film of water. By about 55 mph you may have lost all frictional contact with the road. A sudden gust of wind gives you the surprise of your life.

Two cardinal rules of skidding are: stay off the brake pedal until you have regained steering control and always steer in the direction of the skid.

Be especially wary of an icy surface when it is just below the freezing point. It is twice as slippery as it would be at zero.

So play it safe. Travel at a sensible speed.

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## Keep That Window Open A Bit

Carbon monoxide is odorless, but whenever you smell exhaust fumes you can assume carbon monoxide is present. It is poisonous and sometimes deadly when confined in places like the family car. Make sure your exhaust system is in good condition. This is especially important in winter when driving with windows closed. In any case, it's a good idea to open your windows slightly when driving in winter.