Always expect the unexpected

Visibility isn't as good in the rain. Stopping distances will be longer because of reduced traction. The chances for wheel lock-up under braking is also greater on wet pavement. It would be wise to give some extra "breathing space" in relation to the vehicle in front.

One caution about driving in the rain is especially important during the warm summer months. Most people do slow down in heavy rain conditions, but many drivers are not aware of the hazards involved in a brief rain "shower."

During the summer time there might be several days, or even weeks between rain storms. In these "dry" periods oils become imbedded in the road surface.

If a light rain storm occurs these oils tend to come up through that surface. It is creates a slick road surface that catches many people off guard. Oil on the road is similar to having a thin layer of ice covering the road's surface, resulting in an abrupt loss of traction.

Extra caution is needed, then, even in the lightest rain conditions.

Another dangerous situation is driving over "sheets" of water on the highway. The hazardous effect is known as "aquaplaning," when tires actually lift off the road surface and ride on a thin cushion of water.

A complete loss of steering control can result because of the "aquaplaning" effect. Although many radial tires have advanced tread designs that disperse water rapidly, "aquaplaning" still can occur particularly at higher speeds. Try to avoid puddles or "sheets" of water whenever possible while driving; this will make driving in the rain that much safer.

DRIVING ON SNOW AND ICE

— Snow and ice conditions cause the greatest problems for most drivers. Once again the difficulties stem from a basic lack of understanding.

Just as in rain, stopping distances have to be adjusted for the reduced traction available with ice and snow.

Brake modulation becomes a very critical factor here. Locking brakes on ice or hard-packed snow is a useless exercise. A gradual and gentle appli-

cation of brakes provides the most efficient stops in snow or ice conditions.

The same can be said for moving forward in your vehicle. Jamming the accelerator to the floor in snow not only doesn't get you going any faster, but it also wastes fuel. Gradual acceleration up to speed is the quickest way to get moving in snow and ice.

Driving in cold weather conditions can be made easier by making sure all of the windows, along with the headlights, turn signals, and tail lights are cleared of any ice and snow which has accumulated. It is worth the extra trouble to be able to see clearly instead of driving "blind."

COMMON SENSE DRIVING — This sounds like a noble phrase, and it is too bad that this statement is

it is too bad that this statement is being ignored by many drivers today.

Common sense driving includes a number of things, but it is mainly related to "using your head."

Basic tips that could give you a head start on the way to becoming a

"common sense driver," follow.

It is bad that this next item must be mentioned so often, but, anyone who thinks he can handle a vehicle while intoxicated as well as he can sober is a fool.

Drunk driving is the largest single factor in automobile occidents today. Eliminating the drunk from the highway would do more for auto safety than any safety option that we have now, or that is being planned for the future.

If you are going to drink, please don't drive.

The words "sure thing" do not apply on the highway. As was said before, never assume anything.

Keep your vehicle mechanically fit and keep yourself mentally alert.

Remember that panic never solves anything behind the wheel. Be aware of your ability and your vehicle's capability, then compensate accordingly.

Three words worth thinking about before getting behind the wheel: Caution, Concentration, and Consideration.

