

CONTROLLING A SKID

Cragman, as you start your life of driving, you are going to encounter bad road conditions. When this happens it's important to be safe and be sensible. Bad stuff can happen. But even if you are being sensible, something can happen that you don't expect and all of a sudden you find yourself in a slide. It's possible in cold weather to be minding your own business, drive across a bridge and suddenly you realize you are on pure ice as the car turns sideways. What you do next may make the difference between a good story to tell your friends and a trip to the ICU.

FLIP OVER FOR YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE



EARN THIS NUGGET

With your parents, find access to a four-wheeled vehicle and in a safe environment, perhaps even a closed course, if you have one available, practice getting into a skid and controlling it. Start very small and always think safety and legal. Mud, ice or snow are great environments to practice, and like riding a bike, when you know how to react, it will be second nature when an emergency happens. Remember to only do this with your parent's supervision and approval. Some areas even offer classes specifically to teach teen drivers how to handle skids as part of their driver's education programs.

LEVEL 1

PERIOD 1

TASK 1

First, let's try not to get in trouble. In bad weather, it's always best to stay home, if you can. But if you absolutely need to drive, keep your speed down, don't brake hard, give extra distance between yourself and other vehicles, and be especially careful on turns. Always be alert and avoid distracted driving. Now the best way to deal with a skid is simply have experience. If you are used to off-road driving on mud, perhaps on an ATV, you'll know what to do in the car and it will be second nature to you. But if you never have, you are more likely to panic and the chance of anything anyone has said to you coming to your mind in the moment is almost zero. Here are some simple rules:

- If you start to slide, don't panic. Anything you do with violence will almost certainly make things worse.
- Steer into the skid. If your back end is skidding to the right, it's essentially trying to pass you. You need to steer right to get it to go back where it belongs.
- You can steer into a skid, or you can brake, but you can't do both and still maintain some control.
- When you get into a skid, look ahead to where you want to go. If you panic and start to look at an object like another vehicle, your tendency will be to subconsciously steer towards that object, so strive to focus on where you need to be.
- Braking is very often the first thing that you want to do, but the last thing you should do. For instance, if you are driving a front wheel drive car, and the rear starts sliding, braking will make the slide worse and transfer weight to the front of the car, making the rear slide out more violently, whereas accelerating sends weight to the back and helps the rear find grip. With a rear wheel drive and back end skid, very often it will be too much power at the back end preventing grip, so easing off of the throttle will allow the rear to start to grip again.



There is no substitute for practice and experience, so if you have access to any fourwheeled vehicle and some safe space on an icy or snowy day, take advantage of it. It is not tomfoolery, it is preparedness.