



Water driving.....

Driving Tips

Driving Through Water

Having just returned from the High Country where we encountered well over 100 creek crossings, I thought this might be a good topic to write about this month.

Water driving can take many forms from mountain creeks to salt water estuaries. Water has the potential to do a lot of damage and should only be attempted after careful consideration and proper preparation.

The number one tip when driving through water is to be **cautious** and don't rush, rushing can lead to damage to your vehicle, to the environment and of course to yourself, always remember the first principle of four wheel driving, which is, **Stop, Get Out and Look** which is followed by the second principle, **Think, Assess and Decide**.

- Consider firstly whether it is necessary to go through the water, is there an alternative route.
- Survey the crossing on foot prior to driving looking for obstacles such as rocks, holes, deep water and marking them with branches or sticks.
- Walk across the creek in the tyre track of one wheel and then return in the other.
- Check that there is a suitable exit point.
- Be aware of crocodiles in Northern Australian waterways.
- Check your vehicle's recommended wading depth; this should be taken into consideration.
- Prepare your vehicle for the crossing by fitting a blind over the front to prevent water from getting inside the engine bay; it also helps in creating a bow wave.
- Prepare your vehicle for a quick recovery if the need arises by attaching a snatch strap, the quicker you get out of the water the less damage you are likely to sustain.
- Select a suitable gear and range, this would usually be 1st low, if you encounter obstacles such as rocks then you are more likely to drive over them in 1st low rather than stall the vehicle.
- Enter the water with enough momentum to create a bow wave; the water will then flow around your vehicle rather than through it.
- Avoid changing gears as water could enter the clutch and cause it to slip.
- At the exit point let the water drain before proceeding; this will help keep the track dry for following vehicles.
- When mobile again apply light pressure to the brakes to dry them out.
- Always position hands on the steering wheel so that the thumbs are on the outside of the wheel, if you go into a hole the steering wheel may spin taking your thumbs with it, this is more prevalent in vehicles without power steering.

Safe Driving!
Norm Baker