

OBJECTIVE 2.16 Identify methods for skid avoidance

## **INTRODUCTION**

The driver who avoids skids is a truly skillful, precise, and professional driver. The mental skills used in skid avoidance are more important than the skills needed to get out of a skid.

Drivers should be aware that a vehicle in a skid is a vehicle out of control.

Some of the factors influencing skid avoidance are:

1. Perception
2. Steering
3. Braking
4. Speed Control
5. Roadway positioning

## **CONTENT**

### **1. PERCEPTION**

- a. Searching far enough ahead of the vehicle and maintaining adequate space around the vehicle will enable the driver to identify changes in the roadway and environment early enough to allow for minor adjustments in the position of the vehicle. Maintaining less than the desired amount of space, a driver is more likely to become surprised. This surprise often necessitates a much more drastic movement with the vehicle and may result in a skid.
- b. Some perceptual and space management methods for skid avoidance are:
  - (1) Searching at least 12 seconds ahead
  - (2) Maintaining an adequate following distance of 3-5 seconds from the vehicle in front
- c. Practicing the acceptable search and space management methods will reduce the chances of becoming involved in a skid situation

**2. STEERING**

- a. By maintaining proper hand positioning and using acceptable steering methods, a driver can minimize the vehicle's weight transfer. Sudden weight transfer can result in a loss of control that may cause the vehicle to go into a skid.
- b. Steering methods for skid avoidance:
  - (1) Hand position - by keeping both hands on the steering wheel, a driver is ready for initial steering input
  - (2) The "9-3" steering method - this position will assist the driver of the vehicle in reducing the sudden weight transfer change that may cause a skid
  - (3) Smooth steering inputs - abrupt steering changes may cause sudden weight transfer, situations that may result in a skid

**3. BRAKING**

- a. Using acceptable braking methods, a driver is able to avoid wheel lock-up that can cause the vehicle to go into a skid
- b. Early braking will greatly reduce the chances of wheel lock-up.
- c. Early braking is dependent on recommended searching and braking habits

**4. SPEED CONTROL**

- a. By practicing speed control habits during non-emergency driving, a driver is able to develop a better sense of risk assessment for emergency response driving. To be sensitive to loss of traction, a driver must be aware of subtle changes in speed and situations that may cause the driver to want to exceed reasonable and prudent speeds.
- b. Speed control methods that will increase a driver's ability to avoid skid situations are listed below.
  - (1) Develop acceptable acceleration and deceleration habits
  - (2) Develop acceptable space management methods

- (3) Increase awareness to speed and speed changes. The difference between skidding and not skidding situations may be only 2-3 mph.
- (4) Develop sensitivity to different traction surfaces

## 5. ROADWAY POSITIONING

- a. The lane selected by the driver (and the position chosen within the lane) will significantly affect a driver's ability to avoid a skid.
- b. The more a vehicle has to move laterally, the greater the chances that it will become involved in a skid. By searching at least 12 seconds ahead of the vehicle, a driver can identify potential problems early, decide the appropriate path-of-travel, and begin to execute movement away from the potential problem. If the problem materializes, the driver has already moved the vehicle into a strategic position that will decrease the amount of steering input and severity of the vehicle's steering response.
- c. Roadway positioning methods for skid avoidance include:
  - (1) Lane selection - review space management systems
  - (2) Lane position within the lane - the vehicle favors whatever portion of the lane it is in - center, left, or right

## SUMMARY

All drivers have the potential of becoming involved in a skid. Officers spend more time on the road than the average driver and have an even greater chance of becoming involved in a skid. By identifying the factors that can cause skids and practicing the methods necessary to prevent and control skids, the officer significantly reduces skid potential and increases vehicle control.

## SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

### 35mm SLIDE PRESENTATION

Show the students a series of slides of actual traffic scenes. They are to react to the slides as if they were responding to a call, listing those places they see as potential skid areas. They must explain

their strategy for skid avoidance. Each of the various potential skids should be covered in the scenarios

**SMALL GROUPS**

Divide the class into groups of 3-6 students. Have each group create a list of those emotions and situations that officers experience that cause them to drive their vehicles in a manner that would cause skids. Have the group report its findings, making a list on the board. Tell each group to list the strategies it would use to avoid the potential skid in each situation.

**RANGE**

Numerous exercises can be found in Chapter 8 that may be used to reinforce instruction provided in this lesson plan. Skid pan exercises, operation of vehicles on surfaces that have been made slippery with liquids, soap, sand, etc., are also helpful. An additional option is to use a "skid-car" type of device that simulates low-friction road surfaces. If available, this type of training can be helpful in that it can take place even during warm weather, on most any type of surface, and in most any commonly found law enforcement training situation, i.e., parking lots, airports, etc.

**RESOURCES AND AIDS**

1. Accepted driver training textbooks
2. Space management systems concentrating on speed selection

**SUGGESTED EVALUATION METHODOLOGY****STUDENTS**

1. Written or verbal responses to questions involving skid classifications, skid avoidance methods, or skid control methods
2. Written or verbal response to slide situations, measuring perceptions of skid potential, and skid avoidance skills

**COURSE**

1. Observe on-the-job performance

2. Review agency collision reports to determine if avoidance methods would have prevented the collisions