

Auto

D O N ' T U S E C R U I S E C O N T R O L O N S L I C K R O A D S

Most everyone agrees that cruise control is a great convenience, especially on long road trips. But it can be downright dangerous at times. PEMCO recommends you *do not* use cruise control on wet or slick highways.

Envision this: You merge onto the freeway and set your cruise control, settling in for a cross-state drive. A light drizzle gradually builds to a steady rain. The freeway curves up ahead, but before you reach it you feel the car begin to “float.” Simultaneously, you hear the motor accelerate, and suddenly you’re shooting over the shoulder, slamming the guardrail. You skid to a halt amid busting glass and twisting metal.

What just happened? Your car “hydroplaned” on the wet road surface, and you lost control.

Hydroplaning occurs when enough moisture covers the road that your tires ride on water instead of pavement. When you hydroplane with cruise control on, two things happen. Because water offers no resistance, your motor revs up and your tires – minus any traction – spin faster. You lose control. When the tires eventually settle back to the pavement, the car surges forward.

The same danger exists on snowy or icy roadways. But most people intuitively know not to use cruise control in freezing weather.

Cruise control can’t sense the difference in road surfaces. By the time a car starts sliding and you apply the brakes, it’s too late – you’ve already lost control. That’s why drivers must rely on their own senses and judgment to control their vehicles on slick surfaces.

To be safe, keep it simple: If the road is slick or very wet, don’t use cruise control.

