



News Release

Media Contact:
Georjeane Blumling, Ph.D.
Vice President Public Relations
757-233-3825
Gblum@tidewater.aaa.com

HURRICANE SANDY MAY PULL A PRE-HALLOWEEN TRICK TO VIRGINIA

AAA Advises motorists to exercise extreme caution on the roads and expect travel delays

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (Friday, October 26, 2012) – After last year’s rare October snowstorm affecting most of the Northeast which followed a hurricane and earthquake in the Commonwealth, one would think our area would be due for a treat this year. Unfortunately, the weather has another trick this year by the name of Hurricane Sandy.

Although it’s too early to know exactly which path Sandy will take, one thing is almost certain – Virginia is likely to begin feeling the effect of the storm as early as Sunday. The Commonwealth is anticipating an experience of heavy rainfall, winds, coastal flooding and beach erosion, as well as possible widespread power outages.

“If you don’t have to drive during the storm, then don’t,” said Georjeane Blumling, spokesperson for AAA Tidewater Virginia. “If you must drive, take caution as conditions can become treacherous quickly. Nearly half of the people who die in flash floods are in automobiles because they vastly underestimate water’s power or depth, or don’t act quickly enough to escape.”

AAA TIPS FOR DRIVERS – HURRICANE SANDY

Before The Storm

- Gas up your car since power outages may leave service station without the ability to pump fuel out of the ground.
- Clear your windshield and windows on the inside and outside.
- Be sure tires are properly inflated.
- Check that all vehicle lights are working properly.
- Remove excess items from the car and trunk, and replace them with an emergency road service kit which includes: flashlight with extra batteries, reflective triangles, fire extinguisher, jumper cables, first aid kit, jack and a spare tire, rain gear or extra clothing, and pocket knife.

During The Storm

- Heed the warnings of emergency officials and observe road closure signs.
- Turn on windshield wipers and headlights (not just daytime running lights) as soon as rain begins to fall.
- If windows begin to fog, turn on the car’s defroster, preferably the heat.
- Use low-beam headlights to help other drivers see your car and increase visibility.
- Slow down. Speed limits are set for ideal road conditions. Rain decreases visibility and increases braking distances.
- Increase following distances. Normal dry pavement following distance (3-4) seconds should be increased to 8 seconds or more when driving on slippery surfaces.
- Driving in other vehicle’s tracks can improve traction and help you avoid hydroplaning.
- Drivers of four-wheel drive vehicles must remember they are not immune from hydroplaning on wet surfaces.

-MORE-

- Be wary of high wind conditions and give extra room for larger trucks.
- Watch out for debris or downed wires on the roadways. If in a vehicle that is in contact with a downed power line, the best rule is to stay there until help arrives. If there is an imminent danger, such as fire, stand on the door frame or edge of the vehicle and jump clear with both feet at the same time. Do not make contact with anything on the vehicle so that your body does not become a pathway for the electricity to reach the earth.
- Do not attempt to cross any standing water on the road. As little as six inches of water can make you lose control of your car and two feet of water will carry away most cars.
- Try to avoid bridges and roads that are known to flood.
- If you are forced to stop in traffic due to poor visibility, turn on emergency flashers.

After The Storm

- If your car has been damaged, take pictures of the damage for insurance claims and contact your service agent.
- If power lines are on your vehicle, do not attempt to remove them nor touch the vehicle. Contact the local power company for assistance.
- If the vehicle has been flooded, contact a qualified automotive technician before attempting to start a flood-damaged car. Have the technician inspect all mechanical components including the engine, transmission, steering system, axles, and fuel system for water contamination. Also have the technician drain floodwater from contaminated systems and flush with clean water or a solvent, as appropriate. All contaminated fluids, such as oil, transmission fluid, and engine coolant should be drained and replaced.

“As Sandy crashes into our region, driving can very quickly become hazardous,” said Blumling. “Heavy rain, high winds, and standing water on roads create some of the worst possible driving conditions, largely because unlike snow, drivers cannot see it as readily.”

AAA TIPS FOR TRAVELERS – HURRICANE SANDY

If you are planning to travel to or through an impacted region, be sure to check with your travel agent, airline or cruise provider. Your travel itinerary could have changed due to the storm.

Travel Insurance

- Traditional travel insurance policies are valuable for a variety of travel situations; however, they do not cover acts of God and are therefore no help for travelers facing storm related cancellations. Travel vendors will often offer impacted clients alternate destinations and/or the ability to rebook their travel at a later date.

As part of North America’s largest motoring and leisure travel organization, AAA Tidewater Virginia provides its more than 325,000 members with travel, insurance, financial and automotive-related services. Since its founding AAA Tidewater Virginia has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. For more information, visit AAA.com and follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/AAATWnews](https://twitter.com/AAATWnews).

AAA news releases, high resolution images, broadcast-quality video, fact sheets and podcasts are available on the AAA NewsRoom at AAA.com/news.

Stay connected with AAA on the web via:

[Twitter.com/AAAnews](https://twitter.com/AAAnews)

[Twitter.com/AAA_Safety](https://twitter.com/AAA_Safety)

[Twitter.com/AAAauto](https://twitter.com/AAAauto)

[YouTube.com/AAA](https://www.youtube.com/AAA)

MySpace.com/AAAeveryday

[Facebook.com/AAAFanPage](https://www.facebook.com/AAAFanPage)