

Flooded road safety

As autumn progresses the driving conditions deteriorate. North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service met with road safety colleagues outside Hawes to warn drivers of the hidden dangers of driving through flood water. A photograph was taken where a vehicle had been stranded during the floods in the area to demonstrate how significantly roads can be affected.

Alyson Down, Community Safety Officer says; "North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service attend numerous incidents during periods of poor weather involving drivers becoming stranded in flood water and requiring rescue. Many of these incidents are predictable and preventable, with local flooding 'hotspots' occurring regularly. Flooded roads can hide a variety of hazards from submerged objects such as branches and stones to open manhole covers.

We advise you to drive appropriately for the road conditions and to obey any road closed signs placed by North Yorkshire County Council Highways teams as they are there for your safety. Water just half the height of a vehicles wheel can be enough to sweep it and its occupants from the road or to cause costly engine damage. It is worth noting that many of the vehicles we have to rescue are 4 wheel drive vehicles where perhaps the extra height or vehicle type have given the driver false confidence."



Stuart Grainger Police Sergeant Leyburn and Dales Policing Team added; "Every winter the Police and Fire Service attend numerous vehicles that have become swamped by water on flooded roads. This is often in broad daylight and when 'Road Closed' signs have been ignored. Cars cannot cope with deep floodwater. Please don't also rely on someone having put a sign out to tell you not to drive through the flood, please use common sense, as Highways may not have had chance to put out all the signs to close the affected roads".

"Sometimes the 'Road Closed' signs may still be in place after you have been told that the flood has subsided - but please bear in mind that they may be still in place because there are abandoned cars, logs, and washed up debris left behind on the road, sometimes on blind

corners, and we may still be having them recovered – so for your own safety and ours please obey the signs until they are removed”.

NYFRS and NYCC Highways have the following information for drivers.

- Never just drive on through flooded roads, believing you will get through.
- Look for indications of how deep the water is, can you see the kerb?
- Try not to drive into the flood if another vehicle is coming the other way, the joint waves could swamp your cars engine.
- Is the water running from side to side? If so it could push your vehicle off the road.
- If you decide to try to drive through shallow water, do so very slowly in first gear and slipping the clutch. Keep the engine revving to keep water away from the exhaust and try not to create a bow wave which could swamp your vehicle.
- Obey all road closed signs and diversions
- Be careful driving through floodwater which is near people’s home as if you drive too fast you can create a bow wave which can enter property.

For more information on driving through flood water visit

<https://www.northyorksfire.gov.uk/communitysafety/home-safety/floodwatch>