

Could This Collision Have Been Prevented?

Slippin' and Slidin'

It was late, and the weather was vile. Exhausted from a long day's drive, Dave peered through the windshield wipers at a seeming wall of rain. He could barely see the car 200 feet ahead of him.

Suddenly Dave realized the car in front of him was slowing down to turn. He hit the brakes and tried to steer to one side. But the car did not obey either brakes or steering wheel. It felt like he was trying to steer a boat. In what seemed like slow motion, the car gradually turned sideways and, luckily, drifted off onto the shoulder. A telephone pole put a stop to Dave's journey.



1. What rainy weather phenomenon was responsible for the strange behavior of Dave's car? _____

2. What three things could Dave have done differently that might have prevented the collision?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Answers:

1. Hydroplaning, in which the car's wheels literally lose contact with the road and ride on the surface of the water.

2. He should have:
(1) driven more slowly.

(2) allowed extra following distance for the rain, darkness and poor visibility. At least four seconds following distance was called for here.

(3) stopped to rest; his exhaustion probably contributed to his poor reaction time to the hazard ahead.

