

superior driving techniques



using abs brakes

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Ever wondered why some vehicles brake better than others when confronted with an emergency situation? It may be because they are fitted with one of motoring's biggest safety breakthroughs, the Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS).

The Anti-Lock Braking System is activated when pressure is applied to the brake pedal. It continues whilst pressure is maintained and increases in intensity when force is applied suddenly. The system prevents a vehicle's wheels from locking up enabling the driver to maintain control of the vehicle.

How does ABS work ?

If you brake hard in a vehicle without ABS, the wheels can lock and the vehicle may skid out of control. ABS prevents this by rapidly locking and unlocking the wheels via sensors that monitor lockup.

When braking with ABS a driver must maintain firm pressure on the brake pedal and should not release it until the vehicle has stopped or the danger has passed. If pressure is relaxed, the brakes are released and the vehicle's momentum increases.

The pulsating effect with ABS

When the brake pedal is pushed down fast and hard the driver might hear and feel things such as:

- the pedal pulsating or shuddering
- a knocking noise

This is normal and means the system is working.

ABS compared to standard brakes

It is important to be aware of other vehicles on the road. The driver of a vehicle equipped with ABS could be sharing the road with other, much older, vehicles. It would be unreasonable to expect these older vehicles to brake as well as a newer vehicle. If an emergency situation arises, a vehicle fitted with ABS may avoid a collision by stopping or steering to safety, but unfortunately older vehicles may not be able to do the same.

It is better to avoid an emergency in the first place by maintaining awareness, a safe following distance and a “comfort zone” around your vehicle.

Do not think you will avoid a collision just because you have ABS brakes.

ABS won't stop you any quicker

It is important to note that ABS will not always shorten the braking distance.

With this in mind drivers must always maintain a two to three second following distance in the dry and a three to four second following distance in the wet.

The slightly better braking efficiency provided by ABS will not be of much benefit if you are travelling too close to the vehicle in front.

Good tyres and correct tyre pressure help stopping and control, so conduct regular checks. Correct tyre pressure will improve stopping distance, tyre life and fuel economy.

An expert tip is to maintain tyre pressure around 6KPI (40KPA) higher than the manufacturer's recommendation. By doing this the ride may be a little bumpier, but it will help you stop faster and will provide a buffer allowance for the load you may be carrying.

Experience and knowledge of ABS

It is essential to become familiar with the operation of ABS. A great way to do this is by attending a driver-training program. Here, ABS can be used and tested in a safe environment

Remember these safety tips

- Avoid collisions by maintaining a safe following distance.
- To maximise the ABS in an emergency, press the brake pedal hard and fast and keep the pressure on until the vehicle stops or is safe.
- Ensure your vehicle is serviced regularly, your tyres are in good condition and the tyre pressures are correct.

We hope you never have to use ABS in an emergency situation, but if you do, by reading this brochure and attending a defensive driver-training program you will be prepared.

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Lumley Insurance has designed this brochure to help you understand ABS and to explain how you can obtain the maximum benefit from it.

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